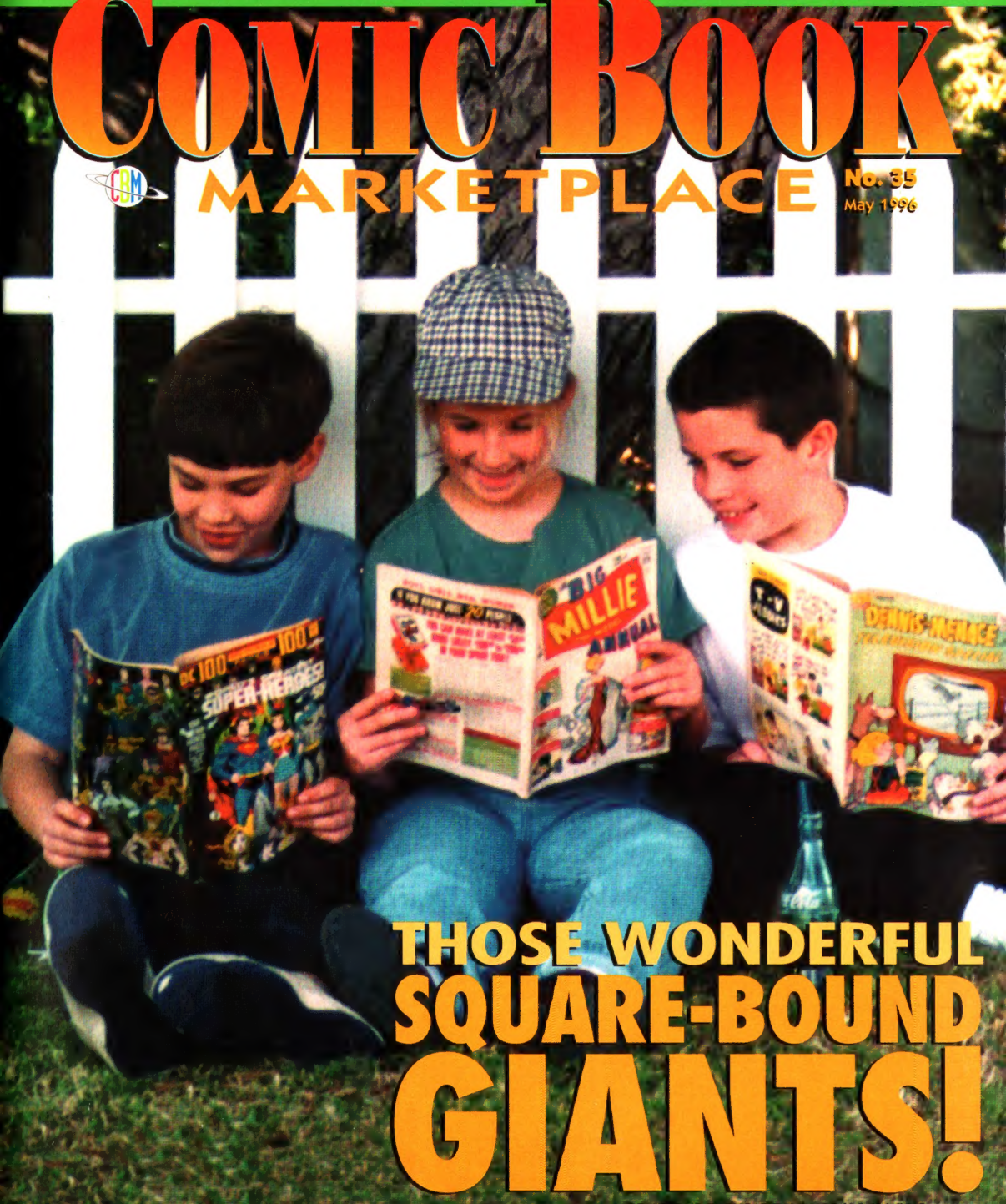
The Magazine for Golden Age & Silver Age Collectors!

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

No. 35
May 1996



THOSE WONDERFUL SQUARE-BOUND GIANTS!

A GEMSTONE PUBLICATION $4.95 U.S./$6.50 Canada

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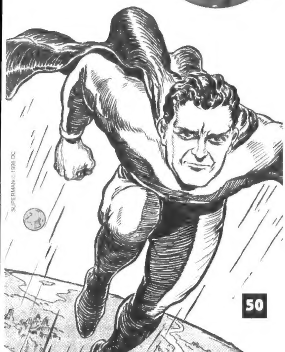

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Volume 2 • Number 35
May 1996
A Gemstone Publication

ON THE COVER
A freshly mowed lawn and a picket fence are put to good use as Ryan, Rachel, and Travis enjoy their favorite square-bound comic books on a sunny Saturday afternoon.

COVER PHOTO CREDIT: GEORGE GREEN

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Issue Number #35, May 1996

WHAT A TRIP!!

Every collector dreams of spending days looking through rare comics, discussing them with other collectors, and, if they're lucky, meeting the greats of the industry. I'm excited to report that that's exactly what I did for an entire week. My seven day collector's odyssey began as a member of the Authenticity, Certification, and Grading committee for the 1996 Sotheby's auction. The committee functions under the auspices of the American Association Of Comicbook Collectors (AACC) and provides grading services to certain larger events in the hobby. For three wonderful (and hard working) New York days, the Committee evaluated and graded thousands of scarce books. Numerous times during the grading of the many lots of comics, I found myself saying "this is the first one of these I've ever held in my hands…" or "I've got to start saving money right away so I can bid on this great lot…"

Although I've been part of four of the six Sotheby's grading committees so far, I have to say that this group worked in a particularly expert, professional, and cohesive fashion. I congratulate fellow committee-men Mike Dalessandro, Bruce Edwards, Jon Berk, Michael Naiman, Dan Greenhalgh, and Jim Payette, on a job extremely well done!

After the work of the Grading Committee was completed, well known historian, collector, and CBM columnist Jon Berk invited Michael Naiman and I to spend a few days looking at his internationally famous collection. After the Herculean effort of virtually emptying a safety deposit area at a local bank, we spent many wonderful hours poring through one beautiful and rare book after another. Even though I detected a bit of nervousness on occasion (as "strangers" looked through and handled some of his books), Jon was extremely cordial and courteous. Our one area of friendly disagreement came as we examined Jon's copies of *Motion Picture Funnies Weekly* #1 and *Marvel* #1. Until more proof is unearthed supporting one book predating the other, this topic will continue to be a focus of debate by all serious collectors. I also want to personally thank Jon's wife, Bonnie, for her exceptional hospitality… and their two delightful children, Zack and Anna, for sharing their impressive trading card and comic collections.

Saying good-bye to the Berks and the state of Connecticut, we made our way by rail to Baltimore, Maryland and from there to Diamond International Galleries in Timonium, Maryland. There we attended the Carl Barks' 95th birthday party… and what an event it was! Carl was his usual sparkling and spry self, and the guests included more notables from all over the country and around the world than I've seen assembled in a long time. My hat is off to Steve Geppi and John Snyder for organizing and executing the smoothest running event that I've ever attended. And the best part was that one of the all-time industry greats got some of the credit due him while he could still enjoy a little of the limelight. (Check out the CBM Scrapbook for pics of all three events.)

Sotheby's and all those rare comics… the Berk collection full of rare comics… Carl Barks' birthday party at Diamond International Galleries where they have all those rare comics… what a wonderful way for a hard-core collector like yours truly to spend a week! Whew… what a trip!

Gary

Gary M. Carter, Editor

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OVST Overst. Price Guide 1
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NM++ 88 (2.5) $3,000

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DC Action Comics 6
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VG 20 (4.5) $2,600

DC All Star Comics 3
Origin/1st App J.S.A.
FN/VFN 50 (3.5) $25,000

DC All Star Comics 20
Mile High/Dr. Fate & Sandman
NM/M 90 (1.0) $5,500

DC All Winners Comics 1
Angel & Black Marvel App.
VFN 60 (4.5) $8,000

MVL Amazing Fantasy 15
Origin/1st App Spider-Man
VFN+ 85 (4.5) $17,500

FWCT America's Greatest 1
Mile High
NM+ 85 (2.0) $8,000

DC Batman 1
Slight Restored by S.Ciccone
S aVFN 60 (3.5) $35,000

DC Batman 3
3rd App Catwoman
VFN+ 85 (3.3) $11,000

DC Batman 4
5th App Joker
VFN+ 85 (3.3) $9,000

TIM Captain America 1
Origin / 1st App Capt America
VG+ 25 (5.0) $10,000

TIM Captain America 4
Murphy Anderson Collection
FN+ 45 (5.5) $3,750

DC Detective Comics 31
Ext. Restore/ 1st Origin Batman
E aVG+ 25 (5.0) $4,500

MVL Fantastic Four 1
Origin/1st App Fantastic Four
VFN+ 85 (3.0) $14,500

TIM Human Torch 2 (#1)
(#1) Intro/Origin Toro
VG+ 25 (3.5) $5,500

MVL Incredible Hulk 1
Origin/1st App Hulk
VFN+ 85 (4.0) $6,250

DC More Fun Comics 52
Mod. Restored by S.Ciccone
M aVFN 60 (4.0) $19,500

DC More Fun Comics 53
Origin Spectre Part 2
FN/VFN 50 (4.5) $19,500

DC More Fun Comics 101
Origin / 1st App Superboy
VFN 60 (3.5) $10,500

DC New Book Of Comics 2
Mile High / White Pages
NM 80 (2.0) $18,000

DC New York World's Fair 1940
Superman,Batman & Robin-C
VFN 60 (4.5) $9,000

FOX Phantom Lady 17
Ovst. Copy/Classic Bondage-C
VFN+ 65 (3.5) $5,750

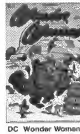
DC Sensation Comics 2
Ella Candy Begins
VF/NM 70 (3.5) $5,500

DC Showcase 4
Origin/1st App SA Flash
NM 80 (4.0) $40,000

DC Strange Adventures 1
Btm Son Split Sealed < 1/4"
S VFN+ 65 (3.5) $2,750

DC Superman 1
Mod. Restored By W. Sarill
M aFN+ 45 (5.5) $21,000

DC Superman 3
2nd Story-R From Action 5
VFN 55 (5.0) $6,000



DC Wonder Woman 17
Mile High / White Pages
M 94 (1.0) $2,750

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Biggest Fan

Having recently acquired the original cover art to Strange Adventures #141, you can imagine how tickled I was to see the cover featured in the color section of Comic Book Marketplace #32. Your feature story on Murphy Anderson was a real treat to this long time fan, and brought back memories of my first meeting with the legendary artist.

I was exhibiting at Wonder Con 1991 in Oakland. As is my wont, I brought various not-for-sale pieces from my comic art collection to help build booth traffic. It's also fun to observe people's reactions when they see original art from one of their favorites. I was stacking comics on the display rack with my back turned to the crowd when I heard a distinguished voice say, "I haven't seen this piece in a long time. Julie take a look at this." Quickly pivoting to see who made the comment, I was shocked when it turned out to be Murphy Anderson himself, with Julius Schwartz in tow! He was looking at a page he had drawn for Showcase #56 featuring Doctor Fate, Hourman, and the Psycho Pirate. Needless to say, I was flabbergasted and muttered something incoherent like, "Gee Mr. Anderson, I'm your biggest fan!" or something inane like that. After we exchanged introductions, I hastily asked he and Julie to sign the page for me, which they gladly did.

I've since been fortunate to acquire other Murphy Anderson originals, including the aforementioned SA cover, but nothing will equal that first meeting - watching him personally sign his Showcase page. He is as graceful in person as the characters he drew for comics. Best,

Bill Howard, California

I'm sure a few CBM readers are growing weary of so many of us DC Silver Age aficionados continually singing the praises the Murphy Anderson... its just that he and his work (under the editorship of the great Julie Schwartz) made such an indelible and positive impact on our childhoods. When I did the interview with Murphy I pretty much reacted the same thing as you Bill... and more than once tried to express how much I respected both his talent and his personality. With a world seemingly full of artistic egos "as big as all outdoors", Murphy is living proof that an immense talent can also be a pleasure to talk to, fun to be around, and a just plain nice person. Forgive me if I wax poetic for a moment... but Murphy Anderson is a truly a calm and bright place in the stormy sea of comic history... and his work will always be historically important, artistically revered, and most of all... enjoyed!.

There's only point in your letter I differ with you on, Bill... I'm Murphy's biggest fan... but I'm sure there are only a few thousand other collectors that make the very same claim!

Without A Doubt

Thanks for a great magazine. It is without a doubt the finest publication for lovers of the Gold & Silver Age that has ever been published! Keep up the great work,

Michael Agnelli, New Hampshire

More Fresh Topics

I stopped collecting comics about 7 years ago and before I did, I mostly collected Golden Age comics and some Silver Age; as well as comic related material such as toys and serial posters. As I mentioned before, I stopped collecting 7 years ago, that was until I was in a local comic shop about two years ago and saw your magazine where it said on top "The Magazine for Golden Age and Silver Age Collectors". I immediately bought it and started reading it regularly and even started collecting a little again with what my budget could afford.

That's what brings me to writing this letter. Although, my collecting has almost stopped again, I tried to *(Continued on page 10)*

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stay involved and rely on your magazine with every issue helping me to keep informed about the hobby. But recently I noticed that the articles are about the same basic topics: artists, Kirby, Schomburg, L.B. Cole or favorite covers (which people can see in the Gerber Book) and most recently an article on Casper collectibles. I realized that Casper was a Harvey comic character. But I think that the majority of your readers are superhero, action-oriented collectors and want to read about other superhero collectibles.

My point I'm trying to make is that I for one and I assume others are interested in seeing other fresh topics; such as old toys and comic related serial posters that pertain to comics and might add new collecting interests to your readers who may not know other collecting genres exist. But with no exposure they will remain one dimensional.

In closing I would like to add that this is not a letter to criticize your magazine. As a matter of fact, your articles are always very well written. This is just my view, maybe the only one you've ever received with these suggestions. But if you try adding the coverage, you might be surprised with reader feedback. Even if a few people, say "Wow, I didn't know that existed!", you have now helped a new collector get started in a related hobby.

H. Sklar, Florida

"Fresh" is what we try for... but we can always try harder. Thanks for your feedback, and welcome back to the best hobby I know!

Took The Plunge

Love your magazine! I have to admit that initially I was put off by the title word "Marketplace". I honestly don't have the money, nor the inclination, to pay today's asking prices for old comic books. My purchases tend towards bound collections of reprints from the likes of DC (when is Volume 3 of The All-Star Archives coming out, anyway?), Marvel, Kitchen Sink, Russ Cochran - mainly comic book stuff, but also some of the newspaper strips like Alley Oop, Flash Gordon, and Calvin & Hobbs. As much as I enjoy wallowing in the source material, I think I get equal satisfaction (why choose?) from reading about the history of the two industries (and the pulps), and the creative personalities who gave them shape, substance, and direction.

It was that latter interest that attracted me to Comic Book Marketplace. After seeing descriptions of the contents of several issues in various Bud Plant catalogues, I finally took the plunge and ordered #'s 22-27 all at once. My fears that CBM was primarily a cost update journal for investors and speculators were forgotten as I savored well-researched, beautifully illustrated, and enthusiastically written articles like Mietkiewicz on Joe Shuster (CBM #22); Hill on Virgil Finlay, and Calhoun on Dr. 13 (CBM #23); Andy Lee on John Romita, Sr. (CBM #24); Wright and Gentner on Phantom Lady (CBM #25); Duin on Schomburg, and Nolan on Detective Chimp (CBM #26); Calhoun on Vincent Sullivan, Mallonee on Hal Jordan, and Nolan on 1956 (CBM #27).

I recently picked up CBM #'s 28-31. So far I've only read #28, wherein I was much impressed with your coverage on human dynamo Jim Steranko; in common with a bazillion other fans of the period, I was blown away by Steranko's innovative storytelling in the late 1960s. In the same issue of CBM I also much admired Severin and Holt's piece on the Shadow of pulps. How about some more info on The Comic Archives, like how they recruit writers and make assignments? In CBM #28's Speak Out! forum, I concur with Stephen Gentner's rallying call: I can abide market reports and related articles if the interest in them helps fund a publication that also offers up wonderful fare like that cited above. And then there are the columns, the layout and design, the vibrant color of the covers and the center section. Start to finish, a very attractive production, Gary. I appreciate the wide range of territory that CBM explores, from horror to humor, romance to superheroes. I began reading comics at age 3, away back in 1954, when I was living in Juneau, Alaska. In that early period ('54-'57) I was first smitten with the Westerns and the funny animal books, with the only superhero that I recall from back then being Superman. By the late 1950s I had moved to California and was focused on the adventures of Superman and Batman. The Spring of 1960 brought a pivotal shift when I discovered the Julie Schwartz titles with The Flash #114, Green Lantern #1, and the Justice League in The Brave and the Bold #30. These were followed by Adam Strange, the revivals of Hawkman and the Atom, and the Marvel renaissance (which I first encountered with FF #5 and Hulk #2).

The mid-1960s brought me into contact with organized fandom (Alter Ego #4). Longtime fan Don Foote, in an act of compassion and generosity directed toward an impoverished teenager, loaned me via the mail dozens of Golden Age comics, a few at a time, in exchange for my written commentaries, which I churned out enthusiastically and in great detail. Don was the one who sold me my first

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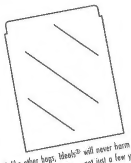

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GA comics, and was partly responsible for opening my eyes to the beyond-superhero delights of the EC line. I eventually acquired more than 200 ECs, a collection that I ended up selling to Jerry Bails. (Does anyone out there know whatever became of Don Foote?)

In 1970 I joined the Navy for a four-year stretch of globe trotting. During that time my comics reading and collecting became more sporadic than had previously been the case. In the past couple of decades my interest and involvement in the hobby has waxed and waned, but Comic Book Marketplace has sparked a feeling of identification and camaraderie that I hadn't felt for the pastime since the days of the Schwartz letter columns and the early superhero and EC fanzines.

Many thanks to you Gary, and to your fine collection of writers, and to your production staff. Keep up the great work. (Oh, by the way, I'm a subscriber now.)

John Thomas, Idaho

All CBM's Incarnations

I am sending an article I had published in the Comics Journal #133. It's about my impressions of reading Seduction of the Innocent. I am a regular reader of CBM - of all its incarnations. Continued success on the publication. Personally, I would like to read a few interpretative articles (mixing social influences and technological influences with comic book editorial and production histories). All the best,

Peter Erickson, Illinois

And boy, there's been a few incarnations, hasn't there. I enjoyed your article, Peter… and your suggestion is well taken. Any chance you might contribute an interpretive article mixing social influences and technological influences with comic book editorial and production histories? Maybe the time is at hand to "put your pen where your suggestion is…". If your interested, give me a call and we can discuss it.

CBM Suggestions

Have to let you know how much I enjoy Comic Book Marketplace. I'm a 31 year-old who has been collecting since 1972 or thereabouts, and CBM is THE magazine I look forward to picking up on my trip to the comic store.

While I enjoy the Golden Age coverage, I wouldn't mind seeing more articles/interviews with some Silver Age creators. I would especially like to see a series of articles on the changes at DC around the time when Carmine Infantino took over as editorial director. All of a sudden, DC had a number of editors who had previously been artists, some of whom were writer/artist/editors. Joe Kubert took over the war line—I'm not sure how much change there was, but my guess is that the more overtly anti-war stories started appearing. Joe Orlando took over some humor books and revamped House of Mystery. Dick Giordano came in and started a handful of books and took over Teen Titans. Mike Sekowsky appears to have been the man called in to dramatically revamp existing series; I loved Sekowsky's Wonder Woman and would especially like to read about how and why he was chosen to revamp Wonder Woman, Metal Men and Supergirl. Had he done previous writing? Did he write any other series for DC in the late 60's and early 70's?

Other suggestions for articles: I would very much like to read an interview with Dick Ayers, particularly one that included the story

PRIVATE COLLECTOR NEEDS YOUR COMICS
(AND I'LL PAY MORE THAN ANYBODY TO GET WHAT I NEED)

I NEED MANY **GOLDEN AND SILVER AGE** BOOKS TO FILL GAPS IN MY PERSONAL COLLECTION. I HAVE PAID HIGHER PRICES TO GET THE BOOKS I WANT THAN MOST THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES SPEND ON DEFENSE!

I HAVE A LARGE RANGE OF COLLECTING INTERESTS. I AM PARTICULARLY LOOKING FOR TONS OF HIGH QUALITY COMIC BOOKS FROM THE FOLLOWING PUBLISHERS:

DC	TIMELY	MARVEL/ATLAS	FAWCETT	CENTAUR	FICTION HOUSE
MLJ	QUALITY	DISNEY	AVON	FOX	MISC. HORROR

I AM ALSO LOOKING FOR MANY CHARACTER RELATED TOYS, MODELS AND GAMES FROM THE 30'S TO THE 70'S. SO IF YOU HAVE ITEMS FROM YOUR CHILDHOOD, THEY MAY BE UNDISCOVERED TREASURES. OF PARTICULAR INTEREST ARE:

ANY IDEAL SUPERHERO DOLLS AND TOYS FROM THE 60'S GIVEAWAYS FROM THE 30'S TO 70'S — ANY PREMIUM TOYS, RINGS OR MEGO DOLLS STAR WARS GI JOE

from ACTION

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to CAPTAIN ACTION

of how Ghost Rider became a Marvel character. I note that a character called the Purple Phantom, with the Ghost Rider's modus operandi, appeared in Two-Gun Kid (art by Ayers) before the Marvel Ghost Rider book started. And I may be alone, but I wouldn't mind an article on the DC romance comics with lots of illustrations, since those books had some great art and are virtually impossible to find

Regarding illustrations, I like the color gallery in the middle of the book, but I question the need to run your own back issue ad on the few color pages. I would also like to see a reduction in the phenomenon of the same cover being reproduced once in black and white with an article, and once in color in the center spread. In #33, Catman #1 appeared three times (including the contents page), and a handful of others appeared twice.

Finally, although I like reading about trends in the demand for old comics, I'm not really interested in lists of books and prices, which seem to dominate the Market Reports section. I'll single out Matt Schiffman and Tim Collins as the two contributors I found most interesting to read in issue #33. Since I like so much about CBM, I won't be too upset if the Market Reports stay the same. However, if some of your contributors were thinking about including more commentary and analysis in their reports, that would be great.

Best wishes to you and all the CBM contributors.

Scott Rowland, California

(1) Although we don't always get perfect marks, we always strive for a balance of articles and topics, especially regarding Gold vs. Silver. The good news is we have a goodly number of articles on Silver Age topics waiting in the wings, and I don't think you'll be disappointed. (2) The Carmine Infantino "takeover" is certainly a historical milestone at DC, as were all of the artist/editor installations you mention. I'd love to read an article on the subject… maybe you could write one? (3) DC Romance is a topic near and dear to my heart (sigh) as I've been striving to complete this area for some decades now. It is a research area that is a lot more complex than many think… and I'm still searching for a knowledgeable hobbyist to take on this somewhat intensive task. (5) The concern over repeated graphics is a good one and they are considered on a case by case basis… we'll try to do better in the future (we even made a few changes in this issue based on your feedback). (6) Many collectors want checklists and pricing information, and although is not always the main focus, we do include this type of info when deemed appropriate. I'd be interested to know what other readers think about pricing info. Letters like yours, Scott, with thoughtful and constructive suggestions are always appreciated and we consider very seriously. Thanks for taking the time to write.

All Star #3 Repro?

Red Alert! Red Alert! I need help! I have an All Star Comic #3 reproduction; size 7 1/4 x 10 1/4, color cover with black & white interior art/text. The cover and text stock is about the same. The reproduction is the same exact mirror reflection of the original ? b/w art/text. The staples are a bit rusty, I guess from aging, otherwise the comic is VF+. .

A local dealer/collector James X, told me that DC comics made a few very limited reproductions of Whiz #2. Detective #27, Sensational #1 and All Star #3 as a gift to office staff and a few lucky fans. Is this true?

Can you please help me with its origin and in addition, its value? JS. This is not the Famous First reprint with color text ad; different cover, size 13 1/4 x 10. Also this reproduction is litho printed, not Xerox or machine copy. This is my professional opinion as a printing lithographer. P.P.S. Please write/call with answer. Thanks.

Felix Lugo, New York

Alan Light did a number reproductions similar to your description and my instinct tells me the issue you mention just may be one of those. Send me a photocopy and I can say for sure.

Strikes Me As Odd

Just wanted to let you know that I have been thoroughly enjoying Comic Book Marketplace for a while now. I'm one of those baby-boomer recycled reborn collectors (I am amazed how many of us pop up in your letter column and elsewhere!) who grew up during the Silver Age—in fact, from your most recent editorial, I surmise that you and I are almost the exact same age. Your mention of cruising the old moldy bookstores for cheap old comics brings me back to my teenage years in Albany, New York—two old junk-shop treasure houses on Broadway: one was called the Capital Bookshop and who could ever remember the other one—where I would find old EC's, early-50's Atlas, DCs, and even Qualities for a dime a shot. *(Continued on page 70)*

BEDROCK CITY COMIC COMPANY

Ace Comics
52 GD $20
53 GD $20
99 GD/VG $15

Alley Oop
14 VG $25
15 VG $32
16 VG $40
17 VG $40
18 VG $35

Buck Rogers
1 GD $300
2 FR $60
3 VG/FN $225
4 VG $180
5 VG/FN $250
6 VG $170

Famous Funnies
24 GD (tape) .. $25
27 GD $45
122 VG $16
137 VG $12
152 VG $12

Flash Gordon (Harvey)
1 VG $45
2 VF $95
4 VF $85

Joe Palooka
4 FN $35
7 FN/VF $40
9 VG/FN $15
10 VG $12
13 VG/FN $20

Little Orphan Annie
FC 76 GD/VG .. $40
FC 152 VF .. $100

Quaker Giveaway
FN $60

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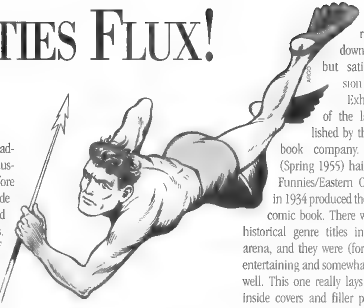
MID-FIFTIES FLUX!

By Pat S. Calhoun



The mid-1950s encompass two radically different comic book industries- the one that existed before the adoption of the Comics Code Authority in October 1954 and the one that came afterwards. Thus the already frenetic scrambling of publishers both large and small, inspired by the postwar publishing boom, included a shifting of genres and styles as the tentative "needs" of the new marketplace were assessed. Such a time of experimentation is sure to produce a wealth of "one-shots", comic titles where the first issue is the only issue. By looking at several of these "brief candles" we can see some of the changes induced by this extraordinary event in comics history.

Exhibit "A" hails from the American Comics Group, although they went so far as to leave their ACG logo off the cover. *The Clutching Hand* #1 (July/August 1954) is much more overtly violent and gross than ACG's other offerings, even in those "last chance" days. Editor Richard Hughes was still chasing the sales figures on EC's horror titles and produced this book in the "blood and guts" mode even though it went against his grain. But there's only a slightly gratuitous air to the stories, and a modicum of taste is preserved.

The opening yarn, "The Real McCoy", has a wayward son with a huge gambling debt who goes-in with the crooked club owner on a phony kidnapping scam to extort money from his rich parents. This is the kind of guy destined to get caught in the trap he's trying to cheat his way out of, and the inevitable occurs. Next up is a vampire yarn redeemed only by the strength of the Harry Lazarus art. Then, "Death of a Doll" is mostly just an excuse for some murder and mayhem, but the ending has a grisly cleverness. It's narrated by an unpleasant host who calls himself "the Corpse Maker".

"The Tiny Heads" comes next and gets the storytelling back on track. This is one of those nasty white hunter among head-shrinking natives things, done to a turn with a lively plot and vivid art. "Yawning Graves" provides a strong finish; it's a good tale with lavish art by Kenneth Landau. The opening scene- where a young scientist allows his wife to test his new "immortality serum" and she dies in agony- packs a punch. After many years in prison, old and crazed, the inventor does create a formula that restores life to the dead, and he makes zombies to go out and exact vengeance upon those that have wronged him and mocked him and hurt him. After a murder spree the master of the undead comes to his richly-deserved downfall in a grim but satisfying conclusion.

A Time Of Experimentation Is Sure To Produce A Wealth Of "One-Shots", Comic Titles Where The First Issue Is The Only Issue.

Exhibit "B" is one of the last books published by the "first" comic book company. *Conquest* #1 (Spring 1955) hails from Famous Funnies/Eastern Color, who back in 1934 produced the first newsstand comic book. There were quite a few historical genre titles in the post-Code arena, and they were (for the most part) entertaining and somewhat educational as well. This one really lays it on, with the inside covers and filler pages all full of cameo panels that include characters ranging from Daniel Boone to Alexander the Great. Of the main features the Beowolf stands out- with Bill Ely's Tyrannosaurus Rex-like interpretation of Grendel exuding a visual and visceral power. The King Richard story left off just as the plot thickened, perhaps in an ill-fated hope of continuation in a hypothetical *Conquest* #2.

The Swamp Fox strip was enjoyable, but it "called for a sequel" as well. The one-pager on Balto the Hero Dog, who kept his team hauling overtime through the snow to deliver medicine to break an epidemic in Nome, Alaska- is the kind of page you just don't see anymore.

Our last one-shot, *Nick Haliday* #1 (May 1956), is curious in that it was published by one of the very few new publishers to enter the industry in the much smaller post-Code marketplace. Argo was devoted to newspaper strip reprints, which was a good idea, because as *Nick Haliday* amply demonstrates- it's a fine source for quality material. But sales results must not have reflected this because Argo sailed into the sunset quickly and quietly.

The first part of the book is daily strips that merge nicely into a 15-page story. *Nick Haliday* reads as if Flash Gordon had bought a cabin cruiser and hung out in Florida instead of jet-setting on the planet Mongo. And artist Keats Petree works very much in the Alex Raymond mode. It's even more like the Raymond of Rip Kirby; both

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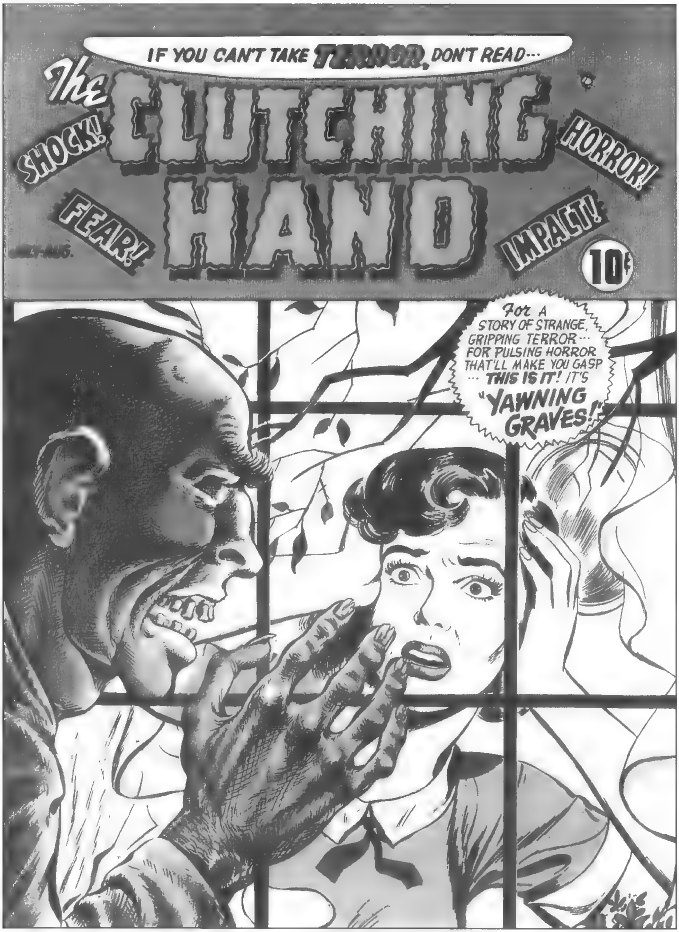

IF YOU CAN'T TAKE TERROR, DON'T READ...
The SHOCK! CLUTCHING HORROR! FEAR! HAND IMPACT!
10¢
For A STORY OF STRANGE, GRIPPING TERROR... FOR PULSING HORROR THAT'LL MAKE YOU GASP ... THIS IS IT! IT'S "YAWNING GRAVES!"

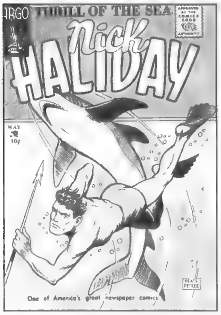
Rip and Nick were war heroes, and now one's a P.I. of sorts and the other captains a boat for hire. The art style is clean romanticized realism, with fine detail and adept figure rendering- including voluptuous women. The story involves Nick's ferrying around a bunch of Commie spies searching for some hidden microfilms that contain names of Red agents and evidence against them. It's pretty good- the characters are convincing, the pace is fast, and the climactic action scene is slick, capping the logical flow of what had gone before. Then there are some two-page Sunday reprints. These are more sea lore anecdotes than stories, vignettes at best, but they are beautifully drawn, with plenty of sharks and octopi.

Argo at least made an attempt to keep some "sophisticated" material on the comics stands, but the drop-off of adult readership after the Code was sudden and irrevocable. *Nick Haliday* is a worthwhile book.

These three one-shots are three last gasps: *Clutching Hand* is the last gasp of the horror genre, *Conquest* is the last gasp of the first comics publisher, and *Nick Haliday* is the last gasp of attempts to recapture an older audience. Collectively they represent the last gasp of the diversity that made the late-1940s and early-1950s such a wonderful era in comic book history. ■

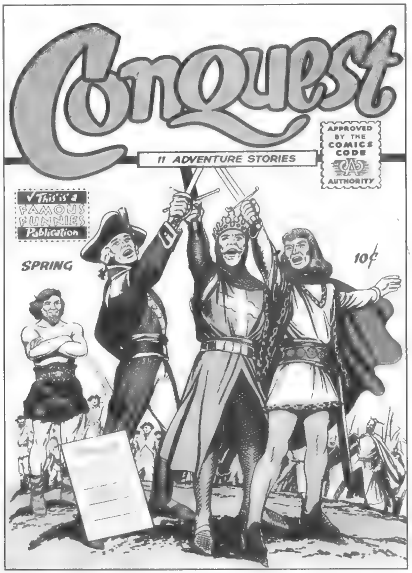
Pat S. Calboun has been reading and collecting comic books since the early 1960s. He is the author/co-author of several Overstreet Annual Price Guide *feature articles, and his "Weird Words" column in* CBM *is now in its sixth year. As* CBM*'s associate editor he has proved adept at article selecting, editing, and packaging. Pat lives with his family in Santa Rosa, California*

Nick Haliday #1 (May 1956) Argo did a handsome job packaging this newspaper strip into comic book form, but it was too subtle and slick for the younger post-Code audience.



***The Clutching Hand* #1 (Jul/Aug 1954) The woman confronted by a zombie is a perfect evocation of the "strange gripping terror" and "pulsing horror" promised in the blurb for "Yawning Graves".**

***Conquest* #1 (Spring 1955) Many great heroes from history and myth gathered to form the "11 adventure stories" in this one-shot effort. This book was one of the first to bear the Comics Code stamp.**



Private Collector

Looking for "Unrestored" Golden Age

(VF+ or better)

Some of the books I'm looking for are:

Action 1
Detective 1/27/31/38
Human Torch 1
All Star 8
More Fun 52/55/73/101
Superman 1
Sub Mariner 1
Green Lantern 1
Wonder Woman 1
Sensation 1
Adventure 40/48
All American 16/19
Batman 1
Capt. America (1)-10
Red Raven 1
Whiz 2

Others are:

Suspense Comics 3
Mystery Men 1-10
Silver Streak 6
Blue Beetle 1
All Winners 1
Daredevil Comics 1
Hit Comics 1/5
Jungle 1
World's Best 1
Amazing Man 5
All Select 1
Mask 1/2
Mystic Comics 1
U.S.A. 1

I will pay ***OVER GUIDE*** *for any of these books!*

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Overhearing this conversation at a recent local comics convention was like listening to the screeching of chalk on a blackboard:

"And then in the 1950's, when there weren't any super heroes..." Arrgggghhhh! Or, as the good guys (and ghouls down at EC) used to say in the 50's, "Good Lord!"

BY MICHELLE NOLAN

YES, THERE WERE HEROES IN THE '50s!

THE SUPER MYTH OF THE MISSING GOOD GUYS

I know I'm probably preaching to some members of the comics choir here, but please bear with me. If nothing else, you folks who know better will still have some fun with a couple of obscure titles a little later in this installment of Nolan's Notebook. And for those of you still laboring under the misconception that the 1950's were a heroic wasteland, well, I have a story for you...

First of all, yes, there were no super hero comics in the 1950's to compare with the style of the early Golden Age issues, with all their raw energy bursting from every cover and panel. Those grand 68-page books of the 1938-43 period have a style and size all their own. And they were, indeed, filled with a percentage and sheer volume of super-doers not seen again until the modern era of slash and dash. But don't get the idea the 1950's were totally bereft of battlers. The comics were smaller and slicker than during the early Golden Age, and many of the stories were set in the past, the future, the jungle, and/or outer space. But the ethos wasn't that much different.

To be sure, a large percentage of the good guys had disappeared (at least temporarily) by the end of the 1940's, leaving DC as the only big publisher of super heroes. But, in fact, many of them started disappearing much earlier. Most of the Fox heroes weren't published after early 1942. Centaur was gone by then. Fiction House also had dispensed with most of its relatively few super heroes by that time, such as Captain Flight and Super American in *Fight Comics*.

But no super heroes in the 50's? Sure, there were super heroes — no fewer than 1,553 comics from the '50s had costume or super heroes! In fact, most of them devoted most or all of those issues to these heroes.

That number came out of my own research and love for the fun books of the '50s. But let's look at some more intriguing numbers, in part, courtesy of the man who does comic book numbers better than anybody... Southern California indexer Dan Stevenson. Did you know that by 1948—one decade after the introduction of Superman started it all—only seven companies produced more than 65 comics of any type in that year (or, to put it another way, at least five new issues a month). There were DC (224), Marvel (212), Dell (192), Fawcett (160), Quality (100), Standard ('98), and Fox (96). Of those seven companies, DC, Fawcett, Quality, and Standard still depended on super heroes to fill the majority of their comic pages in 1948.

Of those four "super" companies, only Standard had totally given up on super heroes by 1950. And throughout the decade, in addition to the 1,553 comics (give or take a couple), more than 1,000 additional comics featured quasi-super heroes—masked western heroes (Batman in the Old West), heroes and heroines who swung on vines (Batman and Batwoman in the jungle), rocket jockeys (Batman in outer space) and ultra-heroic scientists (Batman with a jumpsuit, such as Captain Video).

Granted, there definitely were far fewer Golden Age-style heroes in the 1950's. But what makes the 50's seem like a decade without heroes to so many fans is a phe-

COSTUME AND SUPER HERO COMICS OF THE 1950'S

DC COMICS
Action Comics #140-959
Adventure # 148-967
Detective #155-974
Sensation #95-106
(changes format after 1951)
Star Spangled Comics #100 130 (changes format n 1952)
World's Finest #43-106
All-Star Comics #50-57
(changes format in 1951)
Superman #62-133
Batman #56 128
Wonder Woman #39-110
Superboy #6 77
Superman's Pal, Jimmy Olsen #1-41 (beg. 1954)
Superman's Girl Friend, Lois Lane #1 13 (begins 1958)
The Flash #105-109 (begins 1959)
Backnawk #108 143 (continues from Quality in 1957)
Strange Adv #9-44, 46, 49 (with Captain Comet, character ends in 1954)
Challengers of the Unk #1-10 (begins 1958)
Three D Superman (1953)
Three-D Batman (1953)
Showcase #4, 6-14, 22-23 (1956 59, issues with the Flash, Challengers, Lois Lane, Green Lantern)

FAWCETT COMICS
Captain Marvel #104-150 (ends 1953)
Captain Marvel Jr #81-119 (ends 1953)
The Marvel Family #43 89 (ends January 1954)
Master Comics #111-133 (ends 1953)
Whiz Comics #117 155 (ends 1953)

QUALITY COMICS
Blackhawk #29-107 (last Quality issue in 1956)
Plastic Man #21 64 (ends 1956)
Dollman #26-47 (ends 1953)
Police Comics #98-102 (changes to all crime with #103 in 1950)
Modern Comics #93-102 (ends 1950)
Lady Luck #87-90 (ends 1950)
The Spirit #19-22 (ends 1950)

MARVEL COMICS
Marvel Boy #1-9 (1950-51)
Astonishing #3-6 (1951, issues with Marvel Boy)
Venus #8 19 (ends 1952)
Captain America #76-78 (1954)
Human Torch #36 38 (1954)
Sub-Mariner #33-42 (1954-55)
Young Men #24-28 (1953-54, with CA, HT, SM)
Men's Adv #27-28 (1954, with CA, HT, SM)

ARCHIE COMICS
The Double Life of Private Strong #1-2 (1959)
Adventures of the Fly #1-3 (1959, continues into the 1960's)

LEV GLEASON
Boy Illustories/Comics #50-119 (ends 1956)
Daredevil #58-69, 79 80 (issues with Daregevil end 1951)

MISCELLANEOUS PUBLISHERS
Black Cat #21-99 (Harvey, 1950-51)
Black Cat Western #54-56 (Harvey, 1955)
Arboy Vol 6 #19 (#71) Vo 10 #4 (#111) (Hillman, 1950-53)
Blue Beetle #58-60 (Fox, 1950)
Blue Bolt #102-112 (Star, 1950-52)
Captain Tootsie #1-2 (Toby, 1950)
Invisible Scarlet O'Neil #1-3 (Harvey, 1950 51)
Harvey Hits #51, 56 (Phantom, 1951), #59 (Invisible Scarlet O'Neil, 1952)
The Spirit #1-5 (Fiction House, 1952-54)
Captain 3-D #1 (Harvey, 1953)
The Green Hornet (Dell, Four Color #496, 1953)
Zip-Jet Comics #1 2 (St. John, 1953, Rocketman reprints)
Black Cobra #1,6,3 (Ajax, 1954-55)
Captain Flash #1-4 (Sterling, 1954-55)
Fighting American #1 7 (Prize, 1954-55)
The Flame #5,2,3 (Ajax, 1954-55)
Ghostly Weird Stories #124 (Star, 1954, with Torpedoman)
Phantom Lady #5,2-4 (Ajax, 1954-55)
Space Adventures #13 14 (Charlton, 1954-55, with Blue Beetle)
The Avenger #1-4 (ME, 1955)
Blue Beetle #18-21 (Charlton, 1955)
Samson #12 14 (Ajax, 1955)
Strong Man #1-4 (ME, 1955)
Terrific #16 (Ajax, 1955, with Wonder Boy)
Thrills of Tomorrow #19-20 (Harvey, 1955, with Stuntman reprints)
Wonder Boy #17 18 (Ajax, 1955)
Mr Muscles #22-23 (Charlton, 1956)
Nature Boy #3 5 (Charlton, 1956 57)
Harvey Hits #1,6,12,15,26 (Harvey, 1957-59, with The Phantom, continues into 1960)

nomenon tied up (no pun intended) in the sheer diversity of post-Golden Age comics. Let's look at a few more numbers that, hopefully, will be eye-opening rather than boring. In fact, I'll bet you've never seen numbers presented quite this way, so even if you hate numbers, read on for a few paragraphs . . I'll bet you'll be surprised.

When comic books began introducing original material at the dawn of the Golden Age, not only were there far fewer newsstand comics being published (a grand total of 811 from 1933-39, but super heroes provided the bulk of the original material, beginning in 1940 (after the introduction of the first few super doers in 1938-39. The percentage of super heroic comic books peaked in 1941, when 842

RESIDENT IN THE 1950'S and the overwhelming fear of communism, long-running costume hero Blackhawk is "Trapped in the Kremlin" in issue #83 (Dec 1954).

comics were placed on the stands and at least 672 of them contained super or costume heroes. (These numbers are subject to being off by a couple of issues or so, but only because Stevenson and I can't verify every single issue. But trust us. . . these numbers are statistically reliable).

That means 80 percent of the newsstand comics contained super heroes in 1941—the highest such percentage until fairly recent history. That percentage began an immediate decline, however. The numbers for 1942 were 932 comics issued, with only about 276 minus heroes for a heroic percentage of 70 percent. The heroic percentage dropped to 60 in 1943, with 1,044 comics issued including about 422 minus super heroes. So, in only the two years from 1941 to 1943 (even before the page counts were cut by most companies) the percentage of comics with super heroes dropped a full 20 percent!

I won't bore you with percentages for every year. But by 1952 (the record year for newsstand comic production for the industry's first five decades) no fewer than 3,161 comics were produced. (again, give or take a couple; we may never know the exact numbers.) A total of only 192 of those comics had traditional super heroes, such as Captain Marvel and Dollman, for a percentage of less than seven percent (6.6 percent to be exact).

But let's look at these numbers another way. That total of 192 comics with super heroes (and remember, we're not counting the western masked characters, etc., even though we could) still means that the total number of comics with super heroes on the stands in 1952 was only slightly less than one-third of the total in 1943, still at the height of the Golden Age!

To be sure, after Fawcett went out of the comic business in late 1953 — by this time characters like Dollman and Airboy also had recently disappeared — there was a brief period when heroes were, indeed, pretty hard to find. Even during the "darkest ages" of 1954-58, however, heroes continued to pop up briefly here and there. Considering the entire course of comic book history, super heroes have been in the mainstream for the vast majority of the time.

Let's look at the numbers one more way:

In the 1940's, when 13,142 newsstand comics were published (again, give or take a few), fewer than 3,000 of those were traditional super hero comics. In the 1950's, when 23,350 comics were published, there were 1,552 comics with super heroes. So in pure quantity — as opposed to percentages — there were half as many super hero comics in the 1950's as there were in the 1940's. It's just the percentages, and the greatly increased total number of non-super hero comics, that make it seem as though super heroes had virtually vanished during the 50's.

But now you know otherwise, right? (See lists, too!)

One more thing… but (and it's a but with a capital B): The REAL heroic difference between the early Golden Age and the 1950's is that so few ORIGINAL characters appeared in the 50's. And this is why the era seems so bleak to so many fans. There were often more original heroes introduced in one or two months in the early 40's than in the entire decade of the 50's!

Look at the list of truly original non-DC characters introduced in the 1950-59 era (not revivals, although some were clearly knockoffs): Marvel Boy, The Fly, Captain 3-D, Fighting American, Captain Flash, The Avenger, Strong Man, Mr Muscles, Nature Boy. Except for The Fly, not a single one lasted more than a few issues, and he didn't land on the scene until 1959.

Then there was Tomboy!

Tomboy? Who ever heard of Tomboy? You have, now. (And where else can you get original numbers and obscure characters in the same article.) Tomboy was the backup feature in the four issues of *Captain Flash*, an obscure title from the equally obscure company Sterling Comics in 1954-55 (CF deserves and will get his own article). Tomboy was also the only original full-length female costumed/super hero introduced in the entire decade of the 50's, other than those such as Batwoman and Supergirl from DC!

The first story, looking like something straight out of a Nedor comic in the Golden Age, plunges right into a seven page, non-stop action tale of how a pony-tailed blonde high school student, Janie Jackson (who is secretly Tomboy) foils both a petty criminal and a master crook named The Claw (he has claws for hands, but he's no relation to the villain from the Daredevil Comics of the Golden Age).

The finish, in which Tomboy prevents The Claw's airplane from dropping bombs, is one of the most unrealistic two pages in the history of comics… right down to the panel where Tomboy leaps off the wing of a plane on fire. She dives safely into the harbor, seconds ahead of the crashing plane! Talk about ignoring the laws of gravity and physics!

The second story is a considerably more prosaic six-page tale of how Tomboy defeats a criminal named Sound Wave. In the third tale, again a thinly developed six-pager, one of Tomboy's friends impersonates her in order to impress Tomboy's older brother, Bill. Tomboy, comes to the rescue

TOMBOY
Mention the name Tomboy and the underworld shudders and crawls into its hole! Mention the name of Janie Jackson, and her friends and family will tell you she's a perfect little lady. But nobody in the whole wide world knows that Tomboy and Janie are one and the same—not even Tomboy's most deadly enemy—
the CLAW
COME ON AS A WARNING
HERE IN THE ROOM
BANG!
HE'S ARMED! TAKE COVER
HA HA
BANG!
BANG!

Tomboy makes her debut in the first issue of Captain Flash (Nov 1954) from an obscure company, Sterling Comics. The company lasted less than a year and Tomboy appeared in only four stories.

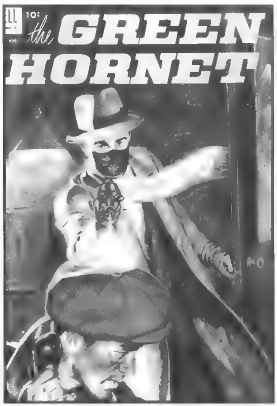
when crooks muddle the plot. This third story shows the briefest glimmerings of characterization and so forth, but there's still no origin story... no explanation of how this seemingly frail teenager acquired the fighting prowess of Tomboy.

A CHARMINGLY OFFBEAT 1950'S super hero cover highlights *Strange Adventures* #42 (Mar 1954), with Captain Comet sharing in the amusement of it all,only a few issues from his departure from the science-fiction title.

In the fourth and final Tomboy tale in *Captain Flash* #4 (July 1955), she rescues her father, a police lieutenant who has pretended to be dishonest in order to capture the leaders of a gambling syndicate. Still no origin, no explanation of how Tomboy came to be — just six pages of action. As a character, Tomboy is as unremarkable as any minor character from an obscure comic of the Golden Age period of 10 years earlier. But it is noteworthy that the publisher tried to create a costumed heroine during a period when nobody was doing so. I don't know who drew this strip — it's unremarkable — or who wrote it, but it sure seems out of place in the comics of the mid-1950's. Tomboy is indeed an anomaly. It's too bad the character was never developed, because there were some fun possibilities here. Tomboy is so obscure that she wasn't even listed in Jeff Rovin's 1985 *Encyclopedia of Super Heroes*.

GREEN HORNET

Speaking of 1950's anomalies, let's buzz on over to Dell comics, about a year earlier than the debut of Tomboy, and look at one of the true anomalies of the era: the *Four Color* one-shot Green Hornet title (#496 dated September 1953.. the arrival date on my copy is July 21). It has a pretty green painted cover and contained two typical Green Hornet crime stories, "The Freight-yard Robberies" (18 pages) and "Proof of Treason" (16 pages including the back covers). The art is competent but unremarkable... again, I haven't a clue who wrote or drew it (perhaps a *CBM* reader can help)



ONE OF THE MOST OBSCURE Dell comics of the 1950's is the Green Hornet one-shot (*Four Color* #496, Sep 1953).

The Green Hornet was still appearing on the radio in syndicated repeats during this period, but this was 13 years before the debut of the short-lived but fondly remembered TV shows (for which Gold Key produced three nice issues). Except for two less-than-inspiring Universal movie serials in 1940, and appearances in 1940's comic books and Big Little Books, the Green Hornet was always a radio character from the time he debuted in 1936. GH came from the fertile imagination of Fran Striker, who also created the Lone Ranger (seems the Green Hornet's father was the Lone Ranger's nephew)

The original run of the radio show ended in 1952, although I can remember listening to repeats well into the 50's and maybe even the early 60's. So I can't imagine why Dell decided to publish this one-shot licensed title, unless for some reason some editor couldn't get "The Flight of the Bumblebee" (the Green Hornet's theme song) out of his mind. (If you've ever heard a Green Hornet radio program, that theme music will be buzzing around in your head all day!) The art was obviously done especially for Dell by Western Publishing; it didn't remotely resemble anything about the Harvey Golden Age title, which ended four years earlier

The only explanation I can think of is that all of Dell's "serious" characters of that era were licensed from others, including Flash Gordon, Tom Corbett, Sergeant Preston of the Yukon, King of the Royal Mounted, Zorro, Cisco Kid, The Lone Ranger, Roy Rogers, The Range Rider, and so forth But the Green Hornet is one of the few "serious" characters who made only one appearance in the old *Four Color* line. Most of them made several before earning their own titles One can only speculate that either the comic didn't sell at all, or Dell did not pursue the rights to the character.

At any rate, The Dell *Four Color* Green Hornet one-shot remains one of the scarcest Dell issues of the 1950's. Indeed, it's almost impossible to locate in high grade and it's no cinch to find in any condition. It's listed as a 4 (average scarcity) in the *Gerber Photo-Journal*, but I think it's a little tougher than that.

So the next time someone asks you the magic question about heroes in the 1950s at a local convention, tell 'em "Yes, There Were Heroes In The '50s!" ■

Michelle Nolan is a nationally recognized collector and researcher of comic books from the '40s through the '60s. She has one of the most extensive collections of 1950's comic books in the United States. In real life Michelle works as a freelance journalist.

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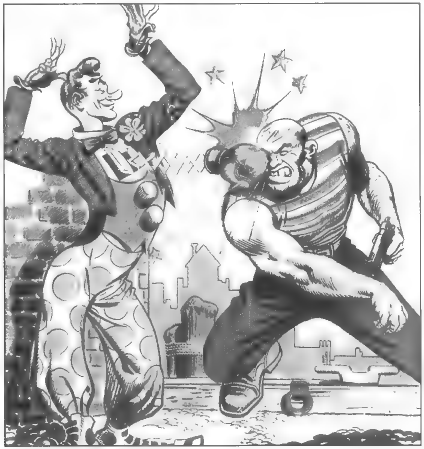
FUNNYMAN...
COMEDIAN & CRIME-FIGHTER!

by Jeff Gelb

Simply stated (and with all due respect to the late Jerry Siegel, who was–after all–the co-creator of Superman) there was something almost humorous about his attempts to make lightning strike twice by inventing a second successful action hero. And the funniest part came just when Jerry was feeling the full effects of DC denying Siegel and Joe Shuster any continuing rights to Superman, the character they had conceived. In an earlier *CBM*, "Men Of Mystery" examined what may have been the most bizarre result of Siegel's efforts-the one-shot *Jon Juan*, who was nothing less than a super-lover. In that case even the art of Alex Schomburg couldn't help make a hit. Not that mixing superheroes with the then-hot romance genre wasn't good strategy, but Jerry's super-lover idea was-at best- worth only the one issue that the title managed. And then there was *Funnyman*.



Siegel had the light touch, and by creating a character with dual identities of comedian and crime-fighter, hoped to attract both humor and hero readers. But this attempt at being extra-light, with more gags and punch-lines, was less successful than the stories where Superman was played for laughs. This accounts for the failure of *Funnyman* to survive longer than the six issues (from 1947 and 1948) that did chronicle the misadventures of the mirthful manhunter.

On the plus side, the graphic part of the team this time was Jerry's old partner, Joe Shuster, who helped put some fun into Funnyman. Although Joe had some assists (Dick Ayers had a hand), the layouts and faces have that Shuster look, unembarrassedly beautifully cartoonish.

Amazingly, Funnyman even ran for a short while in some newspapers. Comics historian Raymond Miller confirmed recently that he actually read Funnyman in the Pittsburgh Post Gazette in 1949, as both a daily and Sunday strip. (This is also noted in Jerry Bails' *Who's Who of American Comic Books* and Maurice Horn's *World Encyclopedia of Comics*.) The strip was obviously sold on the strength of the names of the creative team; and we'll probably never know whether the strip recycled the comic book material or not. This ultra-rare strip remains a bizarre footnote to the comics careers of Siegel and Shuster

I can certainly see why Magazine Enterprises (ME) took a chance on Funnyman. The publisher there, Vince Sullivan, had been the editor of *Action* #1 when the first Superman story was published back

in 1938. In that earlier decade, few believed that a flying man in long underwear would catch the imagination of every child in America... and humor was a big genre in the postwar days. However, hindsight shows Funnyman's shortcomings with clarity. His costume was typical clown fare... a red nose, a silly suit, and big floppy shoes. His major "power' seemed to be the ability to make the villains and crooks laugh as he punched and kicked and tripped them into defeat. And Funnyman traveled in a super car called the Flyin' Flivver. The superhero aspects of the strip added up to slim pickings.

I guess that's why *Overstreet's Guide* lists a *Funnyman* #1 in good condition at $22 (yeah, right). Actually finding one is a lot tougher than that- maybe the dealers are hoarding this book on the thought that the S-&-S team's work should increase in value. Still, when the later issues appear for sale, they are usually inexpensive. And while the stories are far from masterpieces, it's intriguing to see Siegel's mind at work- and the charming and clean Shuster art. They obviously enjoyed working on Funnyman, a character who may have been ahead of his time.

In fact, in the wake of films like "Dumb and Dumber" and "Black Sheep", and the apparent popularity of such dim doings with the now generation, this might be a good time to revive Funnyman. Hey, DC! I've got an idea for you... ■

Jeff Gelb is a freelance writer and editor. His first novel. Spectors, *was published in 1988.*

FUNNYMAN

THE PENULTIMATE ISSUE

Ten years after the Man of Tomorrow's auspicious debut assured the future of comic books, Siegel and Shuster teamed up on a second character. And *Funnyman* #5 (July 1948) features their creation in the penultimate issue of his title. Funnyman was a good way for Jerry and Joe to let off steam- as this was just after their bad deal with DC. The super-schlemiel fought crime for the fun of it, and emerged as an engaging and consistent character . and the comedic art allowed Shuster's "big-foot" tendencies to blossom. The humorous hero didn't become a superstar, but it might be wise to remember that the postwar years were the twilight of the Golden Age heroes- so Funnyman joined a horde of costumed characters riding off into the sunset.

Funnyman #5's opening story pits the daffy daredevil against Louie the Louse, a gangster who's just pulled off a big heist but is afraid to show his too-well-known face in public. He sends his stooges off in search of a soul who is his physical double- so that with a little plastic surgery a phony corpse can be rigged up to take the heat off. Of course Funnyman fits the bill, but he's not about to let the Louse rub him out.

Next up in *Funnyman* #5, Siegel pulls out all the stops as the goofy gumshoe engineers "The Downfall of Noodnick Nogoodnick". This yarn really reminded me of old Superman scripting- as Funnyman rescues Ragsy, an underfed urchin, from the clutches of Nogoodnick, a thug who kidnapped the boy years ago but lacked the brainpower to arrange any ransom. This one's got

one of those heartwarming endings, just like DC used in the great years, long before grim and gritty became the only way to tell a tale.

As an encore to these two full-blown efforts in *Funnyman* #5, there is "The Peculiar Pacifier", in which the nefarious Dr. Gimmick invents a gas that causes anyone who breathes it to become complaisant. One doesn't need a crystal ball to predict that the Doc will get a whiff of his own medicine and willingly swoon into the arms of the law, but it's an enjoyable enough romp. These three stories add up to a 32-page cover-to-cover dose of the slapstick shamus.

– by Pat S. Calhoun

Roy Thomas

As interviewed by Matt Brady

Roy Thomas photo circa 1978-79 at Polo Lounge of Beverly Hills Hotel, while waiting for Phil Silvers to show up for an interview for Marvel's *Celebrity* magazine. A moment later we learned no photos are allowed to be taken at the Polo Lounge, so this is a rarity.

Matt Brady: *Let's start way back at the beginning, Roy. What's the first comic you remember buying?*

Roy Thomas: Actually, it was probably *Batman* or *Superman*. I picked them out of the rack, but at that time, I was four and a half years old at most, so my mother used to read them to me. I remember having this weird idea that the characters in this one book were 'Badman and Robber,' since they wore masks, I figured that they must be crooks. I also thought that Superman got his power from eating soup because the word 'super' wasn't as common back then as it is now. Even Captain Marvel, I thought was invulnerable to bullets because he was made out of marble, and that's why they bounced off him.

A little later on, I discovered *All-Star Comics*, but the first comic I ever picked up was probably a *Batman* or *Superman*.

Matt: *You were already creating comic characters when you were young, weren't you? Tell me about Elephant Giant.*

Roy: Ah, Elephant Giant was the name of one of the heroes in the first comic I ever drew. I must have been seven or so at the time. It was called *All Giant Comics*, and Elephant Giant was one of the heroes. All of the characters and heroes were giants. I don't know why they were all giants, maybe because I was so small. I still have a more or less complete copy.

Matt: *Before long, you were on your way to becoming one of comics' most frequent and respected letter writers of the period. What was the letter column you wrote to?*

Roy: The earliest letter I definitely remember writing was to Julie Schwartz after *Green Lantern* got started in *Showcase*. In fact, I think I had a letter in *Green Lantern* #1. That would've made it in 1960. I was in college. It related to something in the *Showcase* issues that I had been reading ever since issue #4. There weren't many letters, because there weren't many letter pages back then. I did get a couple of cards back, though, since DC had a policy of sending out cards to acknowledge receipt of the letter.

Matt: *Did your letters win any prizes in those early days?*

Roy: I was one of the recipients the very first month that Julie began giving away artwork. I received artwork from *The Flash*, since I had suggested a story using the old Three Dimwits characters that had been Three Stooges take offs in the old '40's *Flash Comics*.

Julie gave me the story that Carmine Infantino had drawn, and [Gardner] Fox had written, because he wrote the old versions of the characters. They didn't work as well with the new version of the Flash, so they were used only once, but I got the artwork.

Later on, Julie sent me the art to a couple of other things, and I still have one or two pieces. He sent me *Justice League* #3, "Slave Ship of Space," and the third Hawkman Showcase cover and one of the interior stories by Joe Kubert, who was and is a favorite of mine. I had that cover up until a couple of years ago, when I traded it for one of the pages from the first JLA/JSA team up.

Matt: *When you say he sent the story, do you mean he sent the finished, lettered pages?*

Roy: All the original art, yeah. It never occurred to me that these things, logically, should be returned to the artists, or as I feel, the artists and the writers. I guess I just

figured that the artists and writers just didn't want it. It never occurred to me that the company never even offered it to the creators.

Matt: *With all of your letter writing, to the best of your knowledge, did any of your letters ever cause a change in a book?*

Roy: It's hard to say. When Jerry Bales and I were starting our fanzine, *Alter Ego*, we thought of a six inch high "atom" character. Julie later wrote back that he already had this idea, and had Gil Kane do up some sketches of the character, but on the other hand, Gil Kane told me that it was his idea, and he sold Julie on it. So who knows?

Later, I did a review of *Fantastic Four* #1 which was published in the first issue of Jerry Bales' *Comic Collector* magazine which split off from *Alter Ego*. My review suggested bringing back the Sub-Mariner, and he came back three issues later. Again, that might've happened anyway, it's really hard to say.

However, Julie did name an offstage character 'Jerry Thomas' after Jerry and me in an early issue of the *Justice League*, so we knew someone was paying attention to us.

Matt: *Moving from letter writing to collecting, what's the first series you remember collecting?*

Roy: The only book that I tried to buy absolutely every issue of was *All Star*. I did miss an issue or two somewhere, and sometimes I went through two or three copies since the books stayed on sale almost for the entire two months… they were expected to as a bimonthly title.

When I was four or five, I would take the issues, and cut the pictures out to make my own stories, so then I'd have to go and get a second copy. There were a few issues that I went through a couple of copies.

As a result of that, I'm missing a few issues in my bound collections of *All-Star* and other comics of that period, including some Timely stuff and *Captain Marvel*. I had to buy copies of all of them later, after mine were bound. I don't think I have much of anything left of what I bought off the newsstands in the '40s, but I do have some of the books I bought from the newsstand in the '50s and '60s.

Matt: *You have your books bound?*

Roy: Yeah, it hurts their value considerably, of course. I started binding them in '65 when I moved to New York, because it was a good way to keep them without dragging them around in boxes. Also, I can put them on the shelf, and they make a very attractive collection.

I only recently sold my collection of the DC Silver Age that started with *Showcase* #4 and the *Justice League*. When I stopped working for DC, I felt that I didn't particularly want to hang on to it any more. By that time, I had enough of it in my head, so I remember the parts I want to.

I should say that I've really enjoyed seeing the DC Archives volumes that they've done which include a lot of the books. The only thing I miss is the letter pages that had

letters written by some friends.

I've bound and held on to a lot of other stuff through the years, such as the comic version of *Mad*, *Panic*, and Joe Kubert's *Tor*, which was a favorite of mine, and the *Animal Comics* and *Pogo* through the '40's and '50's, which is as good a comic book as there ever was in my opinion.

Matt: *Of the books you collect or have collected, was there or is there a book that you're still hunting for? Your own 'Holy Grail' of comics?*

Roy: Well, right now, it's not actually a 'Holy Grail,' because I actually did have it once, and it's not something I'll be killing to get. I started collecting all the DC comics that had the JSA's main members in them around the mid-40's, when I started reading them. I have most of them bound, but the only thing I don't have is the last year of *All-American Comics*, because I sold off one semi-complete collection that I was about to bind. That would run from somewhere in the #90's through #102.

Since deciding that I wanted to get them back and bind them, I haven't run into copies even decent enough to bind. I haven't even seen a copy of *All-American* #100. That and issue #102, which I have, I guess are the hardest issues to get in the later series. I'm still looking for issue #100, so if any of your readers have a copy in good shape that they're willing to part with, I'd be happy to help them out.

The cover art used on *Alter Ego* #11, Roy's now famous early fanzine. The art was drawn by the great Bill Everett (border) and Marie Severin. The piece may be the only time Bill Everett ever drew Namor, Fin, Hydroman, and Amazing-Man (plus Venus and Bronco Bill) all on the same page! Circa early 1970s.

The cover to *Conan* #4 (Apr 1971).

Matt: *What's your favorite single issue story in your collection?*

Roy: I guess my favorite story is more of a period encompassing issues #33-41 of *All-Star* which had the Solomon Grundy story, the introduction of the Wizard, the two Injustice Society stories, the Per Degaton story which guest-starred Superman and Batman where they were all killed and brought back to life (which has never been reprinted), the juvenile delinquency story, and the invasion from Fairy Land which was entirely drawn by Irwin Hasen. That bound volume is the one I'd grab if I ever had to flee with anything.

Matt: *Moving on to your start as a comics' professional, you were a fairly big name in fandom when you went professional, did New York call you, or did you call them?*

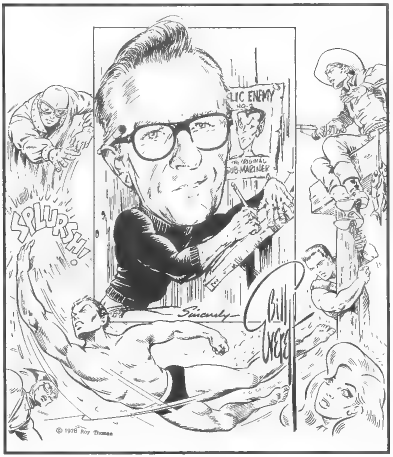
Roy: I sent the letters I got in touch with Julie Schwartz, and he put me in touch with Gardner Fox. At that time, all I knew about writing comics, I had learned from an art and story course that was put out by Joe Kubert and Norman Mauer back when they were doing *Tor* and *The Three Stooges Comics* for St. John.

It became clear to me that [writing comics] was something people did for a living, but it wasn't a growing field. People who were doing the stories had done the stories twenty years earlier. Julie was kind of encouraging, but I didn't think he actually mentioned submitting stories, but then Gardner Fox suggested that I submit a story to Julie, and gave me the idea that Julie would look favorably on my doing this. Also, Gardner sent me a script he wrote for *Detective Comics* with Elongated Man to work from. As a result, I did an Elongated Man story, and sent it in to Julie, and never heard from him.

Many moons later, Gardner sent me a letter saying [my story] wasn't quite what Julie was looking for, but Julie himself never mentioned it to me. On the other hand, since I had corresponded only once with Mort Weisenger at *Superman*, when Mort suddenly sent me a job offer in the spring of '65 to come and work for the summer, I can only believe that Julie had a lot to do with it even though he was working behind the scenes.

Also, I was publishing *Alter Ego* by that time, and had sent one or two issues to New York, not specifically looking for a job. I was just doing *Alter Ego* as a sideline to teaching.

Matt: *Speaking of your instructional career, I believe you were a high school teacher?*



Roy: That's right. I taught English for four years. My real majors were history and social science, and large minors in education and English. At that time, it was easier for a man to get an English teaching job in Missouri, because they felt there were too many female English teachers, I guess.

Matt: *What happened to prompt the move from DC to Marvel after such a short period of time?*

Roy: It wasn't so much a falling out at DC, it was basically that Mort Wiesenger was someone who treated his assistants (I felt) very badly. He was a guy who acted in a way that made me believe he enjoyed torturing his assistants. As someone who had been so bright eyed, and bushy-tailed about getting into the field, finding this guy being so hard on me, and speaking so awfully of E. Nelson Bridwell, who preceded me, just bothered me a lot. I had respect for what Mort had done in developing the Superman mythology, and maybe it was just me, but I was expecting something different.

I had wanted to meet Stan Lee, because I felt he was writing the best comics. As much as I loved Gardner Fox and John Broome, I felt that Stan (with Kirby and Ditko) was creating the best comics. So, I dropped him a line, and he responded, but he really wasn't interested in socializing, he merely asked if I wanted to take the Marvel writer's test, which was essentially to add dialogue to four pages of the *Fantastic Four Annual*.

So I went over to Marvel and got the test from Stan's secretary, Flo Steinberg, finished it that day, and dropped it off the next day to Sol Brodsky. That same day, I got a call asking if I could come over on my lunch hour to meet with Stan. The lunch hour ran an hour and a half, and after ten minutes, Stan had offered me a job, and I accepted immediately, since I was pretty unhappy at DC.

I went back to DC and found Mort, who was already unhappy because I was late, and told him that I was late because I was quitting. I told Mort that I'd stay as long as he wanted and suggested that he should get Nelson Bridwell back as my replacement because he could take the abuse, and was much better than Mort gave him credit for. Mort immediately kicked me out, calling me a spy for Marvel among other things.

Half an hour later, I was back at Marvel looking for something to do right away. That weekend, I was writing my first Marvel comic... I dialogued the already penciled issue of *Modeling With Millie*, the second 'Millie' title Marvel had out at the time.

Matt: *What memories stand out when you recall your first few days at Marvel?*

Roy: One thing I remember was that Stan always called Sol Brodsky, Steve Skates (who came to Marvel a few weeks before I got there), and me into his office to go over corrections on the stories that came to him. Stan would explain why he wanted some changes, for example, when part of a word balloon came down and touched a character, he felt it was encroaching on the art. I remember thinking, "Gee, here's a guy who's really paying close attention to the details." Despite not having more than a high school education, he obviously educated himself, and he knew what he wanted.

Other than that, I don't remember many particulars, other than I was supposed to be a staff writer, and it wasn't supposed to be an editorial position. The thing with that was there were so many other things to do, like check the coloring (Stan never checked the coloring), check out the proofreading, make sure the production staff had done the proofreading, and anything else.

Photo of Roy Thomas taken in 1995 at Stan's X-Cellent Comics & Collectibles (Columbia, South Carolina). The photo was taken as part of a promotion for an educational half-hour TV program with Roy as the host.

The only people that were in the office every day were myself, Sol Brodsky, Flo Steinberg (all three in one little office), and Marie Severin was over in another office with a desk for people who came in to do corrections. Stan only came in two or three days a week.

Basically, we were just a bunch of tiny offices at the end of a corridor of Magazine Management, a company that was several times bigger than Marvel, and did all these 'men's-type' of magazines. At that time, Marvel was looked down on by the magazine writers, and they had a lot of serious writers working in the other offices. That was fascinating to me. There was Bruce J. Friedman, who wrote *Steambath*, and Mario Puzo, who was already at work on his novel when I met him, which turned out to be *The Godfather*.

There was a lot of good talent coming through there, but they didn't want to be associated with comics, because they were working on this "fine" material with Nazis torturing women on the covers and stories like, "Barefoot and Pregnant: I Didn't Mind, But My Mother Did!" (much laughter on both sides) I thought it was ridiculous because I was much happier working for comics than I ever would've been on one of those magazines.

The first superhero story I was given to dialogue was Gene Colan's first *Iron Man* story. Stan took it back a week or two later, and then Sol worked on it, so when it finally came out, the credits had me, Stan, Sol, and others on it, so I wasn't real happy about that. Delegating authority was something that Stan didn't seem too comfortable with. Stan had his

The cover to *Alter Ego* #7 (Fall 1964) featuring "Comic Heroes of Past, Present, and Future". *AE* #7 was the first issue produced after Roy took over the title from Jerry Bails. The Art Editor was Biljo White and the Special Photographic Assistant was Gary Friedrich. *Alter Ego* remains one of the most important fanzines in hobby history.

brother (Larry Leiber) and some other pros (who worked under pseudonyms) writing for him, but except for Larry dialoguing Stan's plots, it was hard for Stan to let go.

Once he did let go, he really let go. After two or three issues of *Sgt. Fury*, he said to me, "You know, I'm making these changes, but most of them are turning your words into my words, but if I start reading the thing carefully, I can't resist doing it. So stop showing them to me. You're doing fine. After all, once the story's written and drawn, what difference will a few words make?" I felt that was a very good approach, much better than the micro management that had gone on in comics since then.

> Conan was kind of a barbarian James Bond

Matt: *You've a number of creative highlights with Marvel in the Silver Age. One of those in the opinion of many fans is the Avengers. They've suggested that your writing defined the Avengers for the Silver Age.*

Roy: That was the first book that I got on and stayed on for a really long time, even more than the year or so that I was on *X-Men*. I did seventy issues in a row, which, if it's not a record, is pretty close.

Matt: *Lately, Neal Adams has commented about his editorial input in The Kree-Skrull War storyline. Did Neal really do the bulk of the plotting?*

Roy: I like Neal a lot, but no, he didn't do most of the plotting. First of all, the Kree-Skrull War was already building up for four or five issues before he came in, because Sal Buscema drew the first several stories, and was scheduled to go on when Neal came on board.

Neal plotted it in the sense that we'd get together and go over story ideas. He had a chance to do some of the plotting. For example, picking up the idea of the Skrulls as cows left over from *Fantastic Four* #2, we did together.

One sequence Neal did altogether was the story where Ant Man went inside the Vision. That plot was entirely his to the extent that Ant Man was just roaming around, and he did a good job with it. I've always maintained that Neal was a co-plotter, but I controlled the direction of the book. I was the functioning editor, and Neal did more than just draw the pictures, but less than full plotting.

Matt: *Did the Kree-Skrull War work out as you had planned, or did you want to draw it into a broader epic?*

Roy: It was always intended to end where it did. I never wanted it to go longer. We could've only gotten one or two more issues out of it anyway. I remember when Neal began the final issue, he had this framing sequence in mind, with the story being told from the far future. I wasn't too wild about it, and gave Neal a lot of rope on that one, but the problem was when the day came for all the art to be in at the office, Neal had turned in the layouts for two or three pages.

By that time, I had given the whole plot to John Buscema. It was basically the same as Neal's, and John had to do the entire issue in just a few days. I wouldn't have minded it if Neal had been working on it full time, but he was doing so many other things, it just didn't make sense to wait. Neal's told me for years that, "One of these days, I'm going to drop the last chapter of the story off." I've told him I'd be happy to dialogue it, and we'd try to print it. Of course now it's been fifteen or twenty years....

Working with Neal was a pleasure in the early stages, and a pleasure to see the finished product, but in between, there was a lot of hell (laughter). Neal's a great guy though, he's definitely one of the artists I most enjoyed working with.

Matt: *Shifting to another book you worked... How did you feel when* X-Men *was canceled after you worked to update it for the changing times?*

Roy: I was really disappointed that it didn't do well. The funny thing is that, near the end, the numbers were creeping up a bit. The issue with Ka-Zar on the cover, the Don Heck Sunfire issue (Tom Palmer tried to make it look like Neal), and the slave-space thing were picking up in sales. That's the reason why only a couple of months after the book was killed, Martin Goodman brought it back as a reprint book. He'd seen that there was a market for the *X-Men*.

Matt: *Let's move on to one of the books you're best known for...* Conan, *which was a departure from Marvel's normal superhero fare. What was the biggest challenge with* Conan*?*

Roy: The big hurdle was getting Marvel to do a sword and sorcery book in the first place. Martin Goodman made those decisions then. Stan was vaguely aware of the character Conan, and knew there were paperbacks out, but not much more.

Originally, we went after all of the big characters at one time or another... Burroughs, Tolkien, and Doc Savage... but we went after Conan first. Stan asked me to write a two or three page memo to Goodman about why Marvel should publish those types of books. So I had to figure out how to sell this idea to a person who didn't want to publish what he

saw as a "medieval" comic book. I wrote a memo that Goodman liked so much, that he would mention it frequently in later years.

So, the hard part was first getting permission to do a sword and sorcery book. Once I had that, I went off to get Conan, whom I thought might be just out of our league… but the literary agent for Howard's estate saw the value of a Conan comic book The deal turned out to serve everyone very well because the Conan books were out of print by the time the movie deal was signed, so the movie was sold more on the comics than on the original books, although the original material is very important.

Matt: *When did you realize that* Conan *was a hit?*

Roy: Well, we realized it two times, actually. First, because the first issue sold pretty well, which we knew six or seven months after it went on sale. We were getting good mail, but you really can't tell anything by that. Then the sales figures went down for the first seven issues, with each issue selling lower numbers than the one before it. The book was actually canceled for one day on the basis of the numbers, by which time fourteen to fifteen issues were in the pipe. Then issue eight sold better than seven, and number nine sold better than eight, and from then on, it was never in danger.

Secondly, in the late '70's, still years before any movies, *Conan* was still one of Marvel's top sellers. When Marvel did those medallions of their top characters, they did Hulk, Spider-Man, and Conan. Not the Fantastic Four, not Thor, not X-men or Avengers, it was Conan. He was a huge seller.

Of course later, in the '80's, it was easier to sell while the movies were coming out. After the movies went downhill, it got harder to sell again, as things seemed to have moved on a little.

Matt: *About the ever-present rumors about* Conan *#3, did it really have low production?*

Roy: It evidently did, but I didn't know it at the time. I learned about it years later, when I would see *Conan* #3 selling for more than *Conan* #2 at conventions. I guess it's probably true, because, if it wasn't a little rarer, dealers couldn't get more money for it. We didn't have very close contacts with the distributors at that time, so there really was no way for us to know back then. I'm not saying that no one in the company knew about it, but I never heard anything.

Matt: *How long did you stay on Conan?*

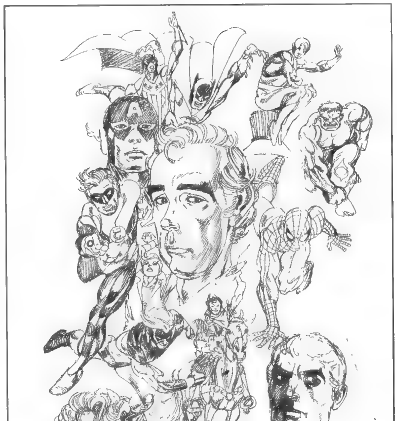
Roy: Ten years, exactly. I quit after #115, which was the 10th anniversary issue.

Matt: *Was* Conan *a tough writing assignment?*

Roy: Yes. I didn't find *Conan* easy to write at all. People think that a lot of stories were adaptations, but they weren't. They were wholly original stories or they were based on tiny synopses, which were really no help at all.

Matt: *What was your attraction to the character that you stayed with for so many years?*

Roy: Basically, I just got to like him. He was a different kind of character than the superheroes that I'd been writing for years. I also loved his world which had such a mish-mash of history, including a little Egyptian, some Roman, some Arabian. All that was put together in a world that was just outlined enough for me to feel comfortable in, but not so much to feel constrictive. I had a plan for his life, but I had a lot of leeway. I really liked the idea of a monolithic hero who was human, but came back despite whatever you threw at him, rather than having any superpowers. Conan was kind of a barbarian James Bond.

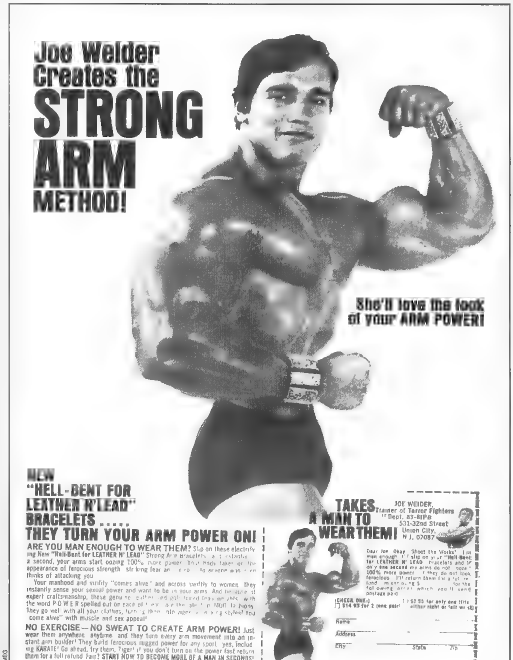


All © 1996 Gil Kane. Characters © DC & Marvel; reproduced here by permission of Gil Kane.

Original self portrait by Gil Kane and presented to Roy in 1970. The sketch contains a rare combination of both Marvel and DC heroes.

Matt: *Another creation of yours was* The Defenders. *They always struck me as an odd grouping of heroes. How did they come about?*

Roy: The original grouping was supposed to be: Hulk, Sub-Mariner, and Silver Surfer, as I had put the three of them together in a couple of issues of Sub-Mariner. Stan liked the grouping, and decided we'd do a new book named *The Defenders*, but he didn't like the idea at the time of


Joe Weider Creates the STRONG ARM METHOD!
She'll love the look of your ARM POWER!
NEW "HELL-BENT FOR LEATHER N'LEAD" BRACELETS ..... THEY TURN YOUR ARM POWER ON!
ARE YOU MAN ENOUGH TO WEAR THEM? Slip on these electrifying New "Hell-Bent for LEATHER N' LEAD" Strong Arm bracelets... & in a second, your arms start oozing 100%+ more power! Your body takes on the appearance of ferocious strength — striking fear and terror into anyone who thinks of attacking you!
Your manhood and virility "comes alive" and across swiftly to women. They instantly sense your sexual power and want to be in your arms. And because of expert craftsmanship, these genuine leather and gold-toned lead weights—with the word POWER spelled out on each of them—are the latest in 'MOD' fashions.
NO EXERCISE — NO SWEAT TO CREATE ARM POWER! Just wear them anywhere, anytime and they turn every arm movement into an instant arm builder! They build ferocious rugged power for any sport, yet, including KARATE! Go all out, try them, for if you don't turn on the power fast return them for a full refund fast! START NOW TO BECOME MORE OF A MAN IN SECONDS!
TAKES A MAN TO WEAR THEM!
JOE WEIDER, Founder of Master Fighters
Dept. 03-BH
1-32nd Street
Union City, N.J. 07087
Name
Address
City
State
Zip

Schwarzenegger's Conan #9 Irony

TAKES A MAN TO WEAR THEM!

Long before the first Conan movie was ever conceived in Hollywood, Arnold Schwarzenegger appeared in *Conan* comics as early as issue #6 (Jun 1971). In the ultimate irony, the man that was to become famous as the actor who portrayed Conan in the movies, was the unidentified star of a Joe Weider strongman ad that appeared in issue #9. Schwarzenegger didn't even receive name credit in the ad and was simply used to promote Weider's "Hell-Bent For Leather 'N' Lead Bracelets" which were guaranteed to "turn your arm power on!"

The ad further states "Are you man enough to wear them?" and "...instantly, in a second, your arms start oozing 100% more power! Your body takes on the appearance of ferocious strength—striking fear and terror into anyone who even thinks of attacking you!... Your manhood and virility 'comes alive' and across swiftly to women—they instantly sense your sexual power and want to be in your arms! And because of expert craftsmanship, these genuine leather and gold-tone lead weights—with the word POWER spelled out on each of them—are the latest in 'MOD' fashions."

anyone besides himself writing the Silver Surfer.

Stan had given me a special dispensation to write the Surfer for those issues of *Sub-Mariner*, but he didn't want it being written on a regular basis by anyone else [but him]. So, therefore, he made me put Dr. Strange in instead. I think Hulk, Sub-Mariner, and Silver Surfer would have been a more natural group… and that's what it was originally supposed to be.

Matt: *I would think that one of the highlights of your career would be your reign as Marvel's editor in chief from 1972 to 1974. What were some of the high and low points you remember as editor in chief?*

Roy: The high point was just getting the job. Stan really didn't want anybody to be called "editor in chief." He wanted me to be called "story editor." I held out for editor in chief because as I told Stan, that was what he was, and since he would still be the publisher, he'd still be over me. It wasn't a case of power or something like that.

The "Devil-Wings Over Shadizar!", featured in *Conan the Barbarian* #6 (Jun 1971) continues to be acclaimed as a high water mark in the Conan saga.

Then there was the question of whether I was editor in chief or executive editor. Executive editor sounded too much like guys who wore ties, so I became the editor in chief. As editor in chief, I never had much of a plan, because we didn't need one in those days. The basic thing was that the writers, and sometimes writer/artists, were acting editors of their own books. That's how things worked at Marvel in those days. I did a lot of things that would've been called 'editorial' from the beginning. That was true of Gerry Conway, Marv Wolfman, Len Wein, Steve Englehart, and all the rest. They served as their own editors, and they were subject to me, and had to make sure that they were pleasing the production managers, Sol Brodsky, and John Breuhorton, who kept the schedule going.

As a result, they did a lot of work, often proofreading, and other things that otherwise they'd have done with an editor. In exchange for the extra work, you had a little bit more freedom in that you didn't have to be constantly trying to justify every plot to an editor. I think it turned out quite well. Of course, we didn't have a lot of big projects to coordinate between the books at that time. Despite this, I would still get all the writers together for lunch or dinner and hash things out, and everyone would show up, except for Steve Gerber, who would always oversleep.

The low of being editor in chief would be when I left under strange circumstances, but that was justified a year and a half later, when they offered me the job back again. I accepted, and then moved to California instead.

Matt: *Looking back on your days as Marvel's editor in chief, was it as tough as people have said it was in those days?*

Roy: Of course it's changed a lot since I had it, and now there's a lot more travel involved. I remember Stan was still there, so being editor in chief was like working under a "supereditor" in a way.

The main thing I remember about it was that suddenly, I had to come into work five days a week instead of two or three, and I didn't like that. I sort of enjoyed the work, but when you're handling so many books, it's hard to keep a handle on everything that's going on, unless you're willing to do all this work outside the office. I was still writing at the time, and I felt that I didn't have the time to devote to all aspects of the job.

I stuck it out for a couple of years, but overall, I wasn't very happy with it. My first wife always said that she was convinced that I didn't like the job and wouldn't keep it for the long haul, because in the couple of years I worked there, I didn't put any pictures up in the office. It always looked like I was ready to move out the next week.

Matt: *During your tenure as editor in chief, was it true that you suggested a character named 'Wolverine' to then* Hulk *writer, Len Wein?*

Roy: Well, Dave Cockrum says he once mentioned a character named Wolverine to me, but it doesn't make much difference as a name, because we were doing so many animal names anyway, and there are only so many animals out there.

A 1980 "Happy Birthday" caricature by Alfredo P. Alcala.

The one thing I know is I considered two names at the time, either a wolverine or a badger. I wanted some mean, northern animal, so we could have a Canadian character. I wanted him to be small, and I think I had the Al Pratt 'Atom' in mind. I didn't go much beyond that. I said he was Canadian, short, a fierce competitor in a 'Tasmanian devil' sort of way, and he wasn't necessarily a mutant.

Then I gave the idea to Len, and he did everything else with him. So, in a sense, I was one of the creators of Wolverine, but on the other hand, it was only in a general sort of way. I'm proud of that, but I don't want to make to much out of it, because someone would've come up with something like him anyway. It was really just an attempt to get a Canadian character, we had sales in Canada, so we figured that we

should have a couple of Canadian characters. It was that same reasoning not too long afterwards that led Al Landau, president of Marvel, to suggest that, if we had an international group, we could sell to different countries. I suggested bringing back the *X-Men*, and make the new members come from different countries where we wanted to sell. All that got lost somewhere by the time it actually came out, and I had quit as editor in chief about two months before it came out, so I didn't even get my name on the book as editor, to my regret.

The new *X-Men* was just one of those things that took on a life of its own once it got started, just like Wolverine.

Matt: *Do you ever regret that your name isn't more closely associated with such legendary characters as The Defenders, the Avengers, the X-Men, and Wolverine? Have you ever been tempted to say, "Why, if not for me....."?*

Roy: Yes I'm tempted, and I say it all the time! On the other hand, if it weren't for people like Chris Claremont, I don't think the *X-Men* would've gone where it did. I don't think there was anything inevitable about it, or anything like that.

I'm not saying that Len Wein, if he'd stuck with it for more than an issue or two, couldn't have done what Claremont did, and I'm not saying that Dave Cockrum didn't contribute a goodly portion of it either. Somebody else maybe could've done it, but there's no way to prove it any more than one can look at Conan and say, "Well, if Roy Thomas hadn't guided the thing...."

It's always a 'what if?' that there's no way of answering. I wish I owned a piece of the characters, sure. All I own is a piece of Red Sonja, and I'm okay by that.

Page 1 and 2 (spread) of the first and only adventure type comic book script Roy ever wrote for a fanzine (circa 1964). It was not published for several years but eventually saw print in *Star-Studded Comics*.

COUNTLESS LIGHT YEARS FROM EARTH, ACROSS THE BLACK VOID OF THE COSMOS, A CREATURE BEYOND HUMAN COMPREHENSION WATCHED— WAITED— FOR THE DAY WHEN EARTHMAN ALAN MORGAN WOULD BE DRAWN TO ITS WORLD TO INHERITANCE FOR A MIGHTY RACE
PURPOSE HE COULD WITH FAITH, ITS HEROES, HE
COULD WHEN BEFORE IN MYSTERIOUS QUEST, ALAN
FOUND HIMSELF EMBROILED IN MORTAL COMBAT IN TH-
FEARFUL, MONSTER AND STRANGE HUMANOIDS AS THE...
WARRIOR of LLARN
Script by ROY THOMAS
Art by SAM GRANGER
BASED ON CHARACTERS CREATED BY GARDNER F. FOX
IN HIS ACE NOVEL WARRIOR OF LLARN

Matt: *Who are the favorite artists you've worked with?*

Roy: There are a number of them. John Buscema would be at the top of the list, and after that, there are a handful of people way up there: Barry Windsor-Smith, Gil Kane, Ross Andru (who's a very underrated artist). There are a lot of other people like Sal Buscema, Rich Buckler... I enjoyed the couple of stories I did with people like Ditko and Kirby from the point of how many people get to work with Kirby and Ditko? Gene Colan was a delight, and I think our version of Dr. Strange was one of the better things of the late '60's. There were so many other people like Dick Ayers and Don Heck that I really enjoyed working with, but John Buscema would be at the absolute top of my list.

Matt: *What is your favorite work?*

Roy: My favorite would probably be some of the early *Conan's* because of the particular mix between Barry and me. Also up there would be some of the *Avengers* and *X-Men* as well, because of Neal's contribution.

John Buscema was a great artist to work with... he gave you what you asked for and maybe a little more. Guys like Barry and Neal added a lot of plot elements that would give it that extra something that made you feel like there were two or three people working on the book.

Matt: *What assignment would you give yourself now?*

Roy: If I had one book I could work on now, and for the rest of my life, it would be *All-Star Squadron*, or some version of the Justice Society set in the past, not the present or future.

Matt: *One last question Roy. Surely, there are easier and "more respectable" ways to make a living than writing comic books. Why do it?*

Roy: It's the money! I've got a 42-acre farm here to support, and there are guys outside tiling the pool right now! (laughter)

All that aside, though, I like it. I've loved comics since I was four years old. Even though I'm not that interested in what's going on in certain aspects of the field right now... with heroes that act like villains, and some of the non-writing that has taken over parts of the field... I still love the medium, and I think it's got a lot of potential. I've enjoyed being a part of it, if not exactly in the front ranks, not too far behind.

Matt: *Thanks for taking time to talk with* CBM *readers...*

Roy: My pleasure, let's do it again sometime. ■

Matt Brady has been collecting comics for over 20 years and writes for a number of comic related publications. Matt is a North Carolina based PhD candidate in the field of Physiology and hopes to avoid growing up at all costs.

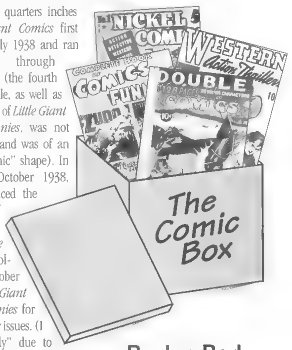
Ultra Rare SQUARE!

Speaking of "squarebound" comicbooks (or, more precisely, "perfect bound" for those of you in-the-know of printer's terminology) let's consider a few from the 1930s and 1940s. In 1933 *Funnies on Parade* was first produced. It had a glossy cover and was "saddle sitched" (sometimes referred to as "round bound" in jargon). The vast majority of comicbooks produced from that time have followed a similar saddle stitched format. However, a few books from this early period were perfect bound. All of these were either "one-shots" or very short-lived titles. Such books fall "squarely" within the context of a review of short-lived titles that this column addresses. This time through some of the less well-known and rare perfect bound books will be highlighted. "Glossed" over will be some of the more well known square back publications such as DC Comics' New Book of Comics, produced in 1937 and 1938, which reprinted material that first appeared in *New Comics* and *More Fun Comics*. Also relatively well known are *World's Best/Finest Comics*, the volumes of *New York World's Fair* and *Big Book of All-American Comics*, as are Timely's "annuals" of *Marvel Mystery* and *Captain America* which rebound previously produced material. So let's take a quick look at some of the more esoteric of the perfect bound comicbooks.

Dell Publishing contributed *Western Action Thrillers* and *Nickel Comics* as perfect bound entries. *Western Action Thrillers*, appearing in April 1937, contained 96 pages and was sort of pulp-like in feel and appearance. It sold for 10¢. The cover was of heavy paper stock and the interior was a series of pictures with extensive narrative captions below them. The art was crude, at best, and was produced only in black and white or with some red thrown in as a third color. Various western features were presented such as "Rimrock O'Reilly" and "Cheyenne Charlie".

Costing only a nickel, Dell also produced *Nickel Comics* in 1938. In a reduced digest format (seven and a half inches wide by five and a half inches tall), *Nickel Comics* also had only a paper stock cover. The contents, produced only in black and white, were a mixture of mostly humor strips with a few adventure stories and puzzle pages thrown in.

This odd size format was followed by a number of similarly shaped publications produced by Centaur in 1938. Centaur published a number of perfect bound books that were six and one half inches wide and four and three quarters inches tall. *Little Giant Comics* first appeared in July 1938 and ran four issues through February 1939 (the fourth issue of this title, as well as the fourth issue of *Little Giant Detective Funnies*, was not perfect bound and was of an odd "mini-comic" shape). In August and October 1938, Centaur produced the two issues of *Little Giant Movie Funnies*, followed in October 1938 by *Little Giant Detective Funnies* for apparently four issues. (I say "apparently" due to the fact that Gerber has no photographs of issues #2 and 3 listing them as "10" and questions their existence. Neither the Church/Mile High or Larson lists reference to these books. Personally, I believe the books were produced, but whether they currently exist is



By Jon Berk

unknown. Without success for over fifteen years, I have looked for these books or someone who has seen them and can verify their existences. If anyone has any verification information regarding these two issues, please contact me care of *CBM*.

While *Little Giant Movie Funnies* contained original "animated movie" serials by Ed Wheelan (including one feature titled "Spider Man") the other two titles reprinted material that had appeared in early issues of *Detective*

A CLOSEUP OF *The Complete Book Of Comics And Funnies*... a 25¢ square-bound one-shot 196 pager from 1944 that featured Zudo The Jungle Boy, Brad Spencer... Wonderman, Perky The Quiz Pig, Cactus Cal, the Magnet, and the Silver Knight (Kinstler art).

Picture Stories and *Funny Picture Stories* which were published by the Comic Magazine Co. and Ultem Publications. The original stories were reproduced in a reduced four panels per page format. Again these efforts were all in black and white and numbered 132 pages in length.

Related to the Centaur products were *Double Comics* and *Double-Up Comics* published by Eliot Publications in the early 1940s. *Double Comics* contained 128 pages (neatly two comic books). The contents of the copy with the "Masked Marvel" on the cover are the copyright of Centaur Publications. This issue contains a copy of *Amazing Man Comics* #16 and *Super-Spy Comics* #1. The material is obviously remainder books that were sloppily repackaged for sale. *Overstreet* references several different issues. *Double Up Comics* reproduced remainders of "pocket-size" comics such as *Spitfire Comics* and *Pocket Comics*. (According to Joe Simon, who first produced pocket-sized comics for Alfred Harvey, this concept was successful, too successful, in that store owners complained that the reduced size made the books susceptible to shop-lifting.)

In November 1939 Better Comics introduced its first title, *Best Comics*. This company was soon to produce titles such as *Thrilling Comics*, *Exciting Comics*, *Startling Comics*, *Wonder Comics* etc. Similar in shape to the above Centaur publications, *Best Comics* was larger in size, a full 9 inches tall and 12 inches wide. This perfect bound title only lasted four issues ending in February 1940, the month that Better's second title, *Thrilling Comics* (named after publisher Ned Pines' pulp publication *Thrilling Wonder Stories*), hit the newsstand. The "lead" feature was "The Red Mask". This feature and most all of the other features seem to have been previously produced comic strips. "The Red Mask" is the mysterious leader of a tribe on an island in the "south seas". A group lead by Colonel Trent and his daughter seek an old acquaintance, Jason Armitage, long lost. Several adventures transpire, including encounters with sea monsters and a giant bird. Of some interest is that the hero "Red Mask" is black, although on the covers he is depicted with white skin! (There is the impression that he may be the long-lost Jason Armitage.)

By the end of issue four the first story line still had not concluded. The rest of the magazine was comprised of the usual innocuous humor strips. Obviously, neither the format nor content were well received in the comicbook marketplace as this title quickly died and was replaced by a more traditional format and content.

In 1944, under the alter ego of William Wise Publishing (Best/Better Publications, Inc.), saw the production of two huge perfect bound comicbooks: *America's Biggest Comics Book* with 196 pages and *Complete Book of Comics and Funnies* which contained 132 pages. Both cost 25¢. The first contained stories of "The Grim Reaper" (who appeared in *Fighting Yank* #7 and on a regular basis in *Wonder Comics*)... and the "Silver Knight". The latter comicbook contained the origin of "Brad Spencer, Wonderman" (who gained the power of invulnerability and great strength by being thrown into the "depolarizing current" of his invention when attacked by Nazi spies). "Wonderman" also appeared in *Mystery Comics* in 1944 and *Wonder Comics* as of issue #9 (December 1946). Although, at best a third rate super-hero, this character is highly collectible due to his immortalization on the covers of *Wonder Comics* as incredibly drawn by Graham Ingels and Alex Schomburg.

Well, that brings us to the brink of the end of the Golden Age. At this juncture I yield the field to those who will further expound and trace the history of perfect bound books throughout comicbook history. Till next we meet... ■

Jon Berk is an Attorney from Hartford and has been collecting comic books for over twenty years. His nationally renowned collection includes one of the most complete prehero Golden Age collections in existence.

A CRUDE PULP/COMIC HYBRID
Western Action Thrillers (Apr 1937) made a futile one-shot effort to capture both pulp readers and comic fans.

LITTLE GIANT COMICS #1
(Jul 1938) reprinted comic book stories in B&W at four panels per page, a format that met with "little" success…

ED WHEELAN'S "MINUTE MOVIES"
were published by several different companies, including *Little Giant Movie Funnies* #1 (Aug 1938).

READ SIDEWAYS, BEST COMICS
#1 starred the Red Mask and was published at the dawn of the hero explosion.

BEST COMICS #2, #3, AND #4 (Dec, Jan, Feb 1939-1940) represent Better Publications first attempts at the comic book format. Better also published *Thrilling* #1 (Feb 1940) as a standard-sized comic featuring characters that tied in with the company's pulp heritage.

DELL'S NICKEL COMICS #1 (1938) was an early small-sized half-priced one-shot that featured art by Otto Messmer, famed creator of Felix the Cat.

LITTLE GIANT DETECTIVE FUNNIES #1 (Oct 1938) was a square-bound "shorty" from Centaur. Issues #2 and #3 may have been published but left no existing copies!

LITTLE GIANT MOVIE FUNNIES #2 (Oct 1938) offered an "animated movie" effect that could be observed if one would "just riffle pages fast".

DOUBLE COMICS WAS ONE OF A FEW early 1940's titles that rebound two unsold "stripped" comics. These books appeared in varying combinations, with entries from different publishers rebound together under a new cover.

LITTLE GIANT COMICS #2 and #3 (Aug and Oct 1938) contained more b&w reprint material. The cover of #3 does feature a little giant, who seems to be getting some laughs out of a certain funnybook.

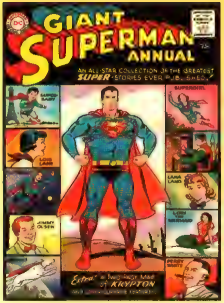
COMPLETE BOOK OF COMICS AND FUNNIES was a 196-page 25¢ giant, published by William Wise in 1944. It features Wonderman, Zudo the Jungle Boy, and Silver Knight.

DOUBLE
128 PAGES
50 SUPER CHARACTERS
COMICS
10¢
MCTY × MFBECOD • MN-A MFBECOD • MN-A MFBECOD
AS THE PARACHUTE TROOPS DROPPED THE MASKED MARVEL EX-PLODED A BOMB IN THE MIDST OF THE ENEMY LEST OVERLORD!
© ELIOT PUB.

TRIPLE VALUE!
the BIG STRANGE TALES ANNUAL
25¢
#1 1962
ON THIS EPIC ISSUE YOU WILL MEET ALL THESE FANTASTIC MENACES, AND MANY MORE!

72 BIG PAGES
Fantastic Four ANNUAL
#1 1963
AT LAST! SUB-MARINER FACES HIS LONG-LOST RULER!
AND IN BRAVES THE MOST FANTASTIC DEPTHS OF ALL TIME!
THE ORIGIN OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

ALL CONTENTS ©MVLMC

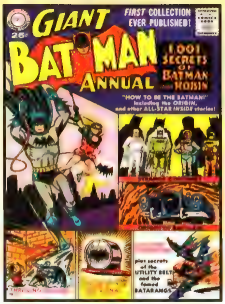


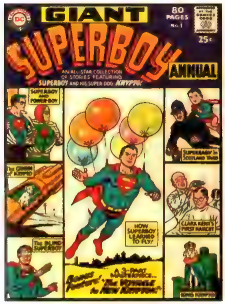
CLASSIC SILVER AGE SQUARE-BOUNDS

Superman Annual #1 (1960)
Rudolph the Red-Nose Reindeer Annual (1962-63, rare)
Flash Annual #1 (1963)
Batman Annual #1 (1961)
Secret Origins #1 (1961)
Superboy Annual #1 (Summer 1964)
Sgt. Rock's Prize Battle Tales (Win1964)
Lois Lane Annual #1 (Summer 1962)

FACING PAGE

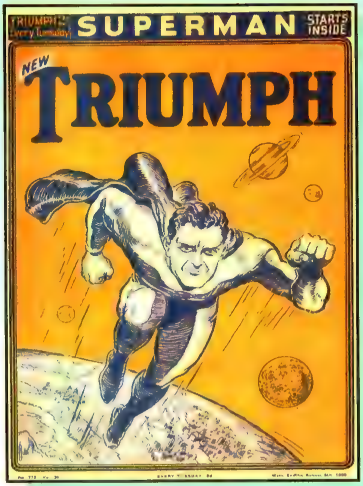
Strange Tales Annual #1 (1962)
Millie The Model Annual #1 (1962)
Fantastic Four Annual #1 (1963)
Amazing Spider-Man #1 (1964)
Sgt. Fury Annual #1 (1965)
PLUS one of the rarest square-bounds:
Marvel Mystery "128 Pager" (1943-44)

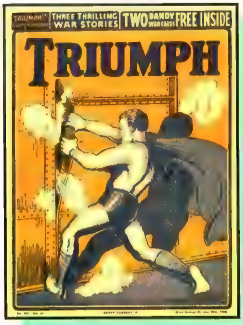




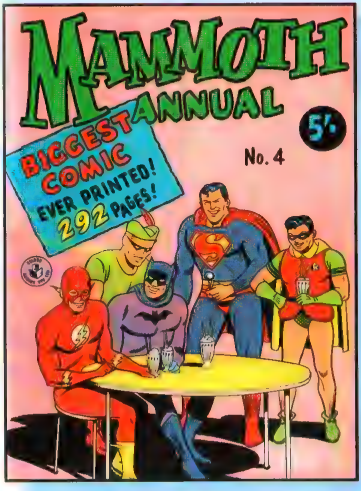
SUPERMAN LEAPS TO DIZZYING HEIGHTS and yanks a tree with his bare hands on the monochromatic covers of *Triumph Weekly*. These Superman covers occur quite early on the Superman timeline.

SUPERMAN © 1996 DC.





CRUDE BUT EFFECTIVE *Triumph Weekly* Superman covers by England's John McCail echo scenes from early *Action Comics*... including the tossed car from *Action Comics* #1 and the ripped-open safe door from *Action Comics* #20.



THE EXTREMELY RARE *Mammoth Annual* #4 reprinted various features from Silver Age DC comics and contained a whopping 292 pages!

SUPERMAN ANNUALS (this one with mostly Wayne Boring art) were not only square-bound, but had "hard" cardboard covers.

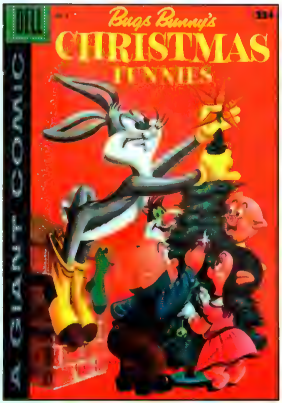
RARE ISSUES of the *Superadventure Annual* are often overlooked by North American collectors.

THE SCARCE *Batman Album* resembles the format of a coloring book with extremely heavy cover stock.

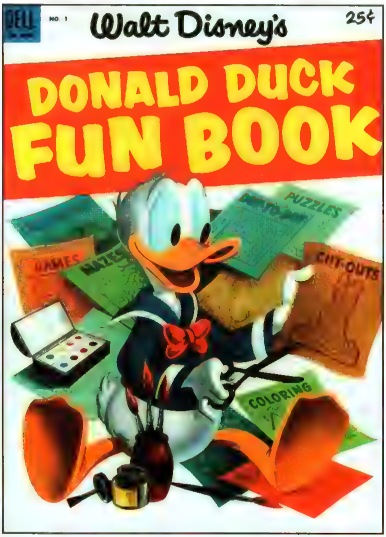
The second Dell Annual, Vacation Parade #1

Tubby & His Clubhouse Pals #1

Tom & Jerry Winter Carnival #2



Bugs Bunny's Christmas Funnies #9



Donald Duck Fun Book #1 (rare in grade)

ALL IN COLOR FOR A Quarter!

Collecting those wonderful square-bound Dell Giants

By William P. Howard

I can't precisely recall the first time I saw a square bound comic. I do remember the feeling it evoked. Pure magic and wonder. Here was a comic book unlike any I had seen before! It was big, very big. It was heavy, very heavy. And it had a queer looking spine, a "square" spine. I've been hooked ever since. No matter the publisher. No matter the title. No matter the characters. And, no matter the era: Golden Age, Silver Age, Bronze Age, and all the ages in between, yet to be named. If it's square bound, I collect it. Maybe my passion for square bounds started as a result of mimicking my father, an antiquarian book collector. Or, maybe it has to do with my profession, magazine publishing. After all, the magazine I publish is square bound too. Regardless, there is something wondrous for me in square bound comic books.

Certainly, the sheer quantity and diversity of square bound titles is enough for any one collector. And there's very little historical information compiled in one place. That would make for a nice research project someday. As it stands now, you have to rely on experience, other collectors, and the *Overstreet Price Guide* to know what to collect.

What exactly is a square bound comic? I'm more than a little bemused by all the definitional wrangling in our hobby, but for the sake of argument, I'll take a stab at it. To make it into my collection, a square bound comic must meet three basic criteria:

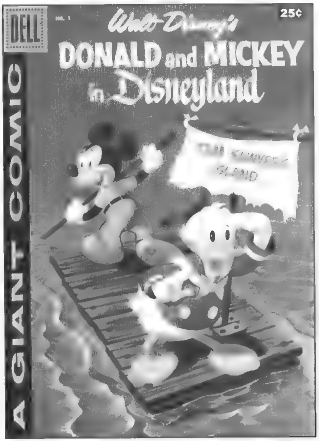
1. it must be "perfect bound" as opposed to "saddle stitched". Interestingly, the term square bound is exclusive to the comics hobby. Everywhere else, a square bound publication is referred to as being perfect bound. This is a technique in which the pages are glued (rather than sewn or stapled through the middle fold of sheets) to the cover and used primarily for magazines, small manuals, phone books, etc.

2. it must be clearly labeled as an annual, giant, king size, special edition, or some other descriptor on the cover or in the indicia that distinguishes its type. I'll admit to some flexibility on this point. For instance, while I don't collect the Golden Age's *World's Finest*, I do collect all Dell Giants, even though the early ones don't include the giant descriptor. It's best that you make your own decision here, because I clearly split hairs to keep myself sane in this regard.

3. it must be at least 64 pages. No 48-page comics need apply for space in my collection.

Generally speaking, perfect bound publications are more expensive to produce than their saddle stitched brethren. And, technically speaking, a saddle stitched comic allows a more controlled presentation because it isn't so violently bent open at the center. Ever try to see a two page artistic spread in a perfect bound book? It's fairly clumsy. Material at the gutter (center) is more visible in saddle stitched comics which allows more of the artwork to be seen and is easier on the reader's eyes. Why then did comic publishers go through the trouble of creating these square bound wonders? Most likely they thought they could sell more of them at a higher price. And, indeed, the vast majority of square bounds carried a cover price at least twice as high as a saddle stitched comic

I think it also had something to do with presentation on the newsstand. A perfect bound comic has less of a tendency to flop around on a magazine rack because the spine is stiffer. And because the cover surrounds more pages in the comic itself, a heavier paper stock was often used for protection. This



use of heavier cover stocks in many square bound comics turned out to be a two edged sword. While they achieved their goal of protecting the insides, the stiffer covers were more prone to damage than the flexible, lighter stocks used in saddle stitched comics. It's probably also fair to say that because square bound comics had more sheer reading material on the inside - remember our 64 page minimum - they were handled a great deal more than many comics. It's this terrible combination of stiff covers and extreme handling that makes collecting one particular line of square bounds so unusually fun. Not to mention difficult.

Dell Giants

In 1949, Dell Publishing produced a 132 page square bound featuring 25 pages by the great Duckman himself, Carl Barks, titled *Christmas Parade* #1. Thus was born the Dell Giant. Totaling more than 195 books, Dell published what is, by my estimation, the preeminent run of square bound giants ever. No square bound collection can be called remotely complete without Dell Giants.

Many elements make Dell Giants special, including stories drawn by Barks, Gottfredson, Walt Kelly, and Jesse Marsh; theme issues released during Halloween and Christmas; major characters representing Disney, Hanna Barbera, and other studios; photo covers, westerns, etc.. But, what really sets them apart from other square bounds are their covers. Printed on a nice cover stock (80#?) that is surely among the stiffest and heaviest in the long history of comics, they were finished with a glossy varnish that makes them shine as if powered by electricity. They're that bright!

Of course, finding Dell Giants in anything remotely resembling their original condition is ridiculously difficult. With the exception of small caches from the Western and Poughkeepsie files, locating a naturally occurring high grade Dell Giant is like finding a needle in a haystack. Dell Giants are among the most abused comics in existence. Many of these comics were actually designed to be used and then disposed of. Aimed at young children, they feature every conceivable manner of game. You name it and they've got it. Connect the dots? No problem. Cut outs? Why not on the back cover? Crossword puzzles? How about more than one per comic?

As if all this wasn't enough, their extra stiff covers - even by square bound standards - have fared very poorly over the years. You think the small corner crease on your *Showcase* #27 looks bad? You ought to see the same crease on a Dell Giant cover. Does the image of Death Valley mean anything to you? Even the slightest defect is magnified on a Dell Giant.

Let's suppose for a moment, that you can find a Dell Giant that hasn't had its guts torn out; is free of pencil and ink, with its cover intact. Then there is the problem of preservation. The oldest Dell Giants are more than 45 years old. The same varnish that was so central in creating and preserving the beautiful cover gloss is notorious for browning the inside

edges of the covers. Not to mention that the page quality of even the file copies is nowhere near the quality of the White Mountain or Edgar Church (Mile High) pedigrees. Storage was a problem for another reason too. If you stack too many square bound giants, you can get the opposite effect of the compression phenomenon that worked to the advantage of the Edgar Church collection. A flattened spine is among the worst defects found on square bound comics.

Rarest and Most in Demand

So which Dell Giants are the rarest and in highest demand. Here's one man's opinion. I'm interested in yours.

1. *Vacation Parade* #1. 1950. I've never seen a true near mint copy, and I doubt one exists. The best copies have a nasty spine roll. This is one tough book to find even in low grade. Before I die, I hope to see a high grade copy. A big 132 pager, with 55 pages of Barks, to boot.

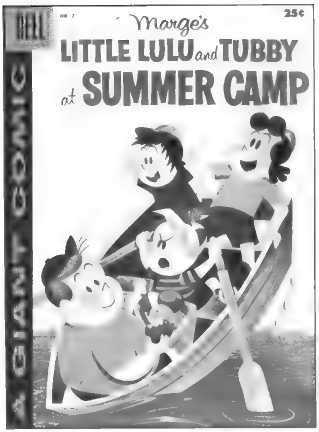
2. *Peter Pan Treasure Chest*, 1953. It's a whopping 212 pages, making it the largest Dell Giant. You'll pay for those pages, as it also Guides for more than any other one. Again, I know of no near mint copies. By my grading, I've never seen a true very fine copy. I'd pay just to hold a near mint copy for a couple of minutes. This book has gotten a lot of press lately, and I've heard some dealers say it's not so rare after all. Poppycock. Maybe 12 -20 exist. Period. Most of them are terribly beaten up with brown to brittle pages. Publicity has a way of bringing rare books out of the closet, and that's the case here. If you see one, snatch it up.

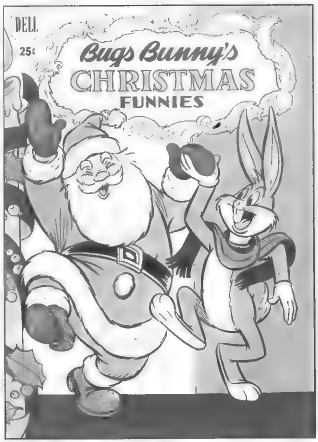
3. *Donald Duck Fun Books* #1 and #2, 1953 and 1954. Chances are the only high grade copies are the half dozen or so file copies that exist. And, that doesn't exactly make them commonplace. While you can at least occasionally find the *Fun Books*, try finding them in unused condition. They've got the whole pantheon of games inside. If you do stumble across one, examine it closely - it will more than likely be written in or have pages cut out. The toughest one-two combination in square bound giants.

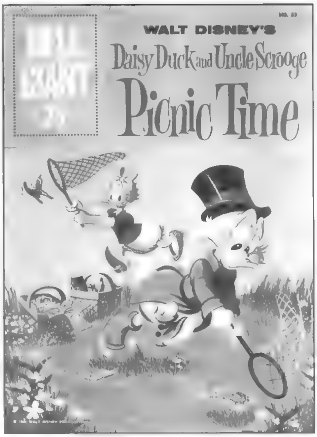
4. *Tales from the Tomb* #1. A later Dell Giant, published in 1962, featuring a particularly creepy cover and John Stanley stories. Among a group of single issue Dell Giants (Universal Presents Dracula the Mummy, 1963, is another tough book to find in grade) published after the sequentially numbered run ceased, using a lighter cover stock. I bought the only NM copy I've ever seen from Bob Casali at last year's San Diego Con. Does anyone else out there have another copy in this condition? And, what would that make? Two in NM?

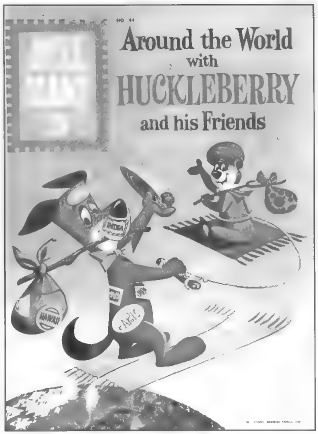
5. *The Beatles*. A very high demand book as it crosses over into Beatles memorabilia. Photo cover with pin ups, published in 1964. A file copy at the low end of the NM range sold for more than $500 at Sotheby's a couple of years ago. A Dell Giant - Fab Four four color.

6. *Pogo Parade* (1953). All Walt Kelly art, reprinted









from *Animal Comics*. No copies of this splendid, green Walt Kelly cover were found in the Western or Poughkeepsie files, making this an especially tough book to find in grade. I've seen some really pretty VF's, but no NM's. Who out there has got one?

7. *Christmas Parade* #1, 1949. The first Dell Giant. Barks art. Find it in grade. I dare you. Enough said.

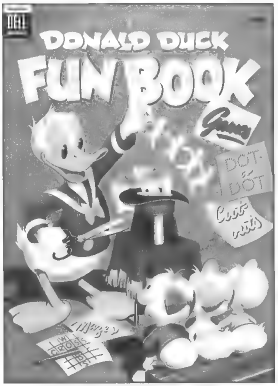
As if it's not hard enough to find any Dell Giants in premium condition, the matter is further complicated by the fact that many editions were published in two versions. One had a back cover with an ad for chewing gum or bicycles, etc. The other version usually had a wraparound featuring an extension of the cover art, or a puzzle, or even a graphic featuring the starring character. I've limited my collecting to one of the two back covers' versions.

Which covers do collectors generally recognize as the best? While some of the above Giants would certainly make many lists, here are some other prized Dell Giant covers:

1. *Uncle Donald & His Nephews Dude Ranch* (1961). This just might be the best Dell Giant cover. It sports a flaming red and orange cover, featuring Donald and his nephews in huge cowboy hats. With the famous Dell Giant cover varnish working its magic, the cover looks like it's on fire. Highly prized by Giant collectors - if you can find one.

2. *Sleeping Beauty* #1 (1959). With its vibrant purples, this whimsical cover is one of my personal favorites.

3. *Treasury of Horses* (1955). OK. Maybe it is a corny horse cover, but colors like this you won't find everyday. When I show friends my file copy, it usually elicits a gasp



or two. Again, try to find one.

4. *Man in Space* (1960). This Giant is one of the few priced at 35¢ instead of the usual 25¢, probably because of its 100 page size. It's the only space-themed Dell Giant cover, and I don't know a Giant collector who doesn't want one.

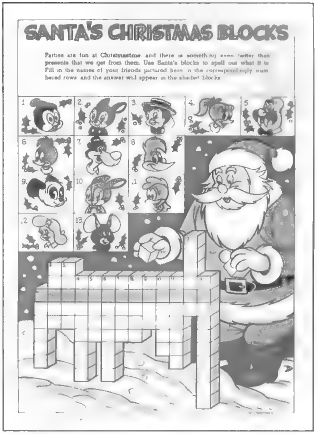
5. *Mighty Mouse in Outer Space* (1961). Oops. Guess I misspoke myself. Mighty travels to outer space, makes this the only other space-themed Dell Giant besides Man in Space. Mighty Mouse bursting off the page in all his glory, makes this cover especially sought after.

6. *Tarzan's Jungle World.* All of these books have terrific Jesse Marsh painted covers and are coveted by Tarzan collectors and Dell Giant collectors alike

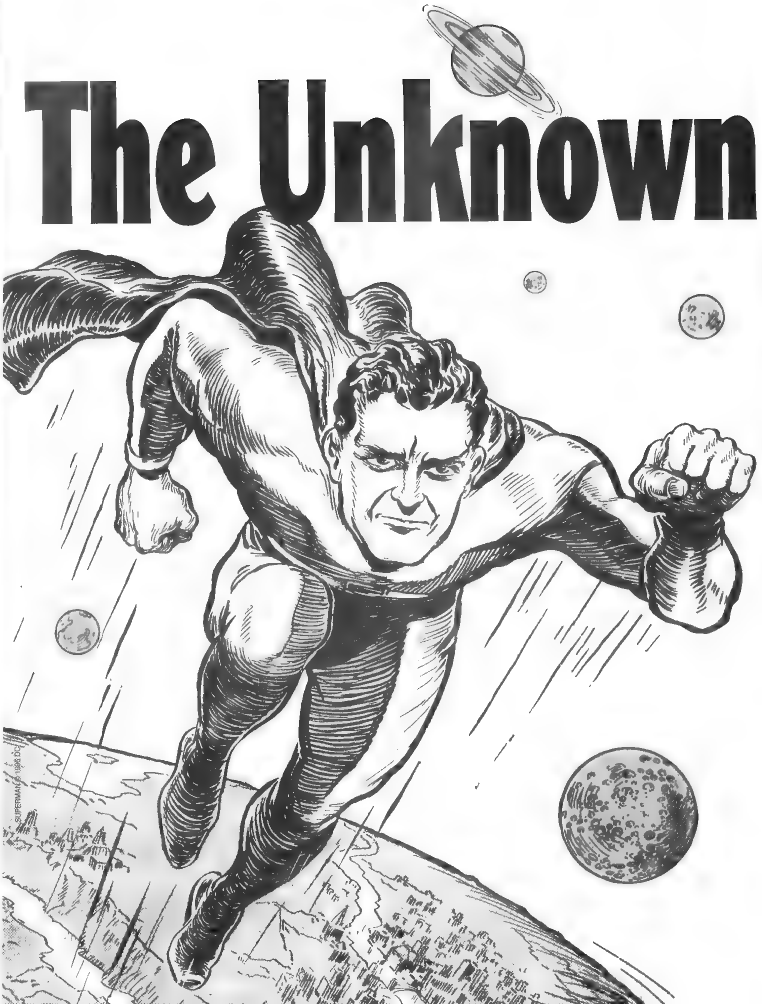
Dell Giants offer something for everyone. If you're a square bound collector and haven't gotten into Dell Giants, what are you waiting for? They'll provide you, like they have me, with endless hours of entertainment and enjoyment. Occupying that strange era between 1949 and the early sixties, they'll challenge even your best sleuthing to collect them all. ■

Bill Howard is the associate publisher of PC Computing Magazine *which recently passed the one million paid reader milestone, making it the fastest growing magazine in special interest publishing history.*

Many Dell Giants came in two versions, one with a back cover graphic…the other with a back cover ad. (At right both back covers to *Woody Woodpecker's Christmas Party, Dell Giant* #54.)



The Unknown



Superman

Submitted by
Steven Blasi

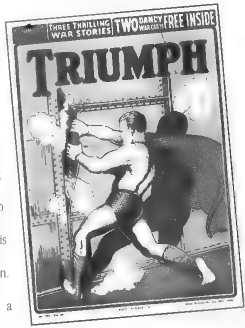
LOOK! UP IN THE SKY! IT'S A BIRD! IT'S A PLANE! NO. IT'S that Superman chap! Yes, back in 1939, Superman made his debut in the United Kingdom in the weekly publication Triumph Magazine. It was over a full year before Superman made the trans-Atlantic journey from the pages of *Action Comics* to Britain. British readers got their first glimpse of the Man of Steel as he flew out at them from the cover of *New Triumph* #772, August 1939. Although the Superman covers of *New Triumph* were rendered by popular British cartoonist John McCail, the interior stories were done by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. It is apparent that McCail redrew the heading, the title, and a synopsis of the previous week's adventure was provided since one single Superman story was spread out over the period of several weeks.

New Triumph was produced by Amalgamated Press. The issues measured 9" by 12" and were 24 pages including the covers. The covers of *New Triumph* were usually blue and yellow in color while the interiors were black and white.

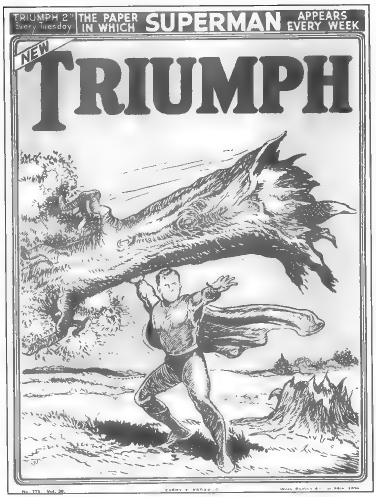
Other features that appeared in *New Triumph* included the tales of Mad Carew, Demon Air Ace and Z 1, Relentless Spy, Zatara The Master Magician (also from the pages of *Action Comics*), Peter Farrell Detective, John Irons Lone Fighter (the war tales of a soldier during World War I), The Bare Foot Whirlwinds (the unusual exploits of a British soccer team), Derickson Dene (the thrilling tales of an explorer/adventurer), Charka, King Of The Giant Apes (Britain's version of Tarzan), and Rusty Coles, The Flying Joker (another daredevil pilot story).

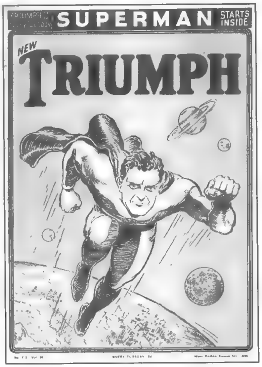
The run of *New Triumph* featuring Superman lasted for only 21 issues due to Britain's entrance into war against the Axis powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan. Superman would not appear again in a British weekly for another two decades.

Reminiscent of their *Action* cover counterparts *New Triumph* used tried-and-true feats of strength to showcase the son of Krypton... tossing the car from *Action* #1 and ripping open the safe from *Action* #20 are good examples.

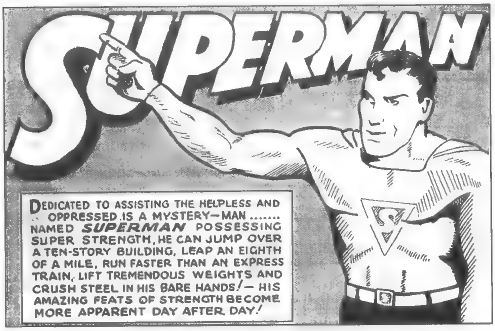


The run of *New Triumphs* featuring Superman is extremely rare and reportedly, only four complete sets of this historic magazine still exist today. ■





The New Triumph rendition of Superman looks so odd to the US comic collector that at first glance the character seems almost primative. Note that the splash panel at right (redrawn by an unknown British artist to replace the original Shuster splash panel) depicts Superman with a thinnner torso and extremely elongated angular facial features. Note also that the arm is thinner, hand larger, and the muscle development is smaller and less proportionate than the Shuster version.


SUPERMAN
DEDICATED TO ASSISTING THE HELPLESS AND OPPRESSED IS A MYSTERY—MAN ..... NAMED SUPERMAN POSSESSING SUPER STRENGTH, HE CAN JUMP OVER A TEN-STORY BUILDING, LEAP AN EIGHTH OF A MILE, RUN FASTER THAN AN EXPRESS TRAIN, LIFT TREMENDOUS WEIGHTS AND CRUSH STEEL IN HIS BARE HANDS!— HIS AMAZING FEATS OF STRENGTH BECOME MORE APPARENT DAY AFTER DAY!

We'd like you to write for us!!

Contact the CBM Editorial Department...
(619) 437-1996

Western File Copies of DELL SQUARE-BOUND ANNUALS For Sale

These books were originally selected from the Western files for their amazing quality by John Snyder a number of years ago... and all are in exceptionally high-grade. They are from my personal collection and I am offering them to the public for the first time.

Interested parties, send a self addressed stamped envelope to receive a complete list.

Gary M. Carter
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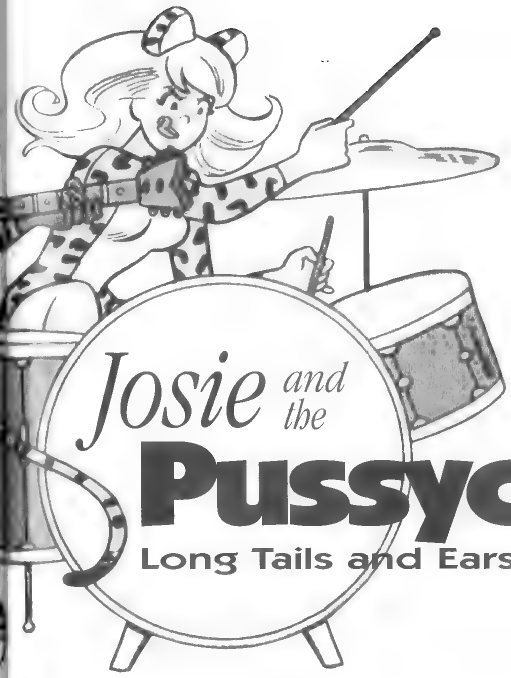
By Chuck Alligood

Seems like it was only yesterday when Dan Decarlo went to work for Archie Publications, fresh from his Millie the Model assignment for Marvel. Few could have predicted the profound impact he would have on his new employer. He took the Archie house style, however, and gave it an energy and an expressiveness that many comic aficionados describe as "the Archie look". Neal Adams netted his first job in comics with a page of art he traced from a Dan DeCarlo piece, and, to this day, Archie still instructs its new artists to ape DeCarlo's style.

One of the esteemed DeCarlo's most interesting creations was the Josie series . . . and many of the series' most important characters were inspired by people important to DeCarlo. Josie, the strip's title character, was visually inspired by DeCarlo's wife. With the hair-do of Lesley Gore and the wardrobe of Connie Francis, Josie had a look that was fresh and unique among comicbook heroines. As dated as it appears today, the character's original look still has a striking charm.



When Don Decarlo began working for Archie, no one could have predicted his impact... to this day Archie still instructs its new artists to ape Decarlo's style!

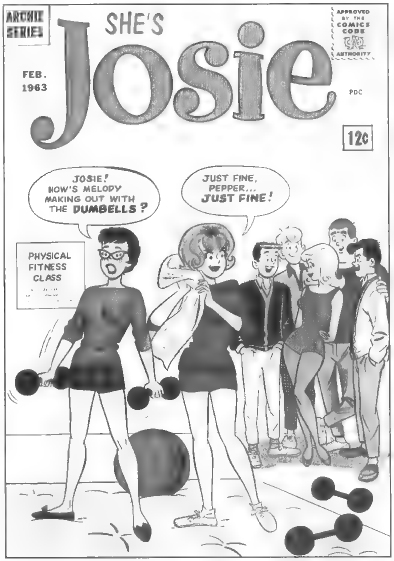
Josie and the Pussycats

Long Tails and Ears For Hats!

Pepper, on the other hand, was based on DeCarlo's sons, who were going through their rebellious stages during the strip's creation. Pepper was aggressively sarcastic, always questioning authority, and constantly willing to buck the odds. Pepper wasn't just another comicbook character... she was one of the best representations of the Sixties' American teenager ever produced by any medium

Then, of course, there was Melody, a combination of the speaking voice of Mrs. DeCarlo and the obvious charms of Marilyn Monroe. Melody was possibly the most delightful "dumb blonde" ever created for the comics. She was as incapable of repeating a cliche correctly, as she was uable to walk down a street without causing gawking men to wreck their cars as they stared at her. The best Josie stories often featured Melody, so no one was surprised that a Melody spin-off book was once proposed.

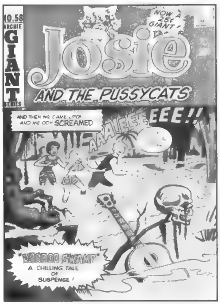
DeCarlo contributed heavily to the series, in terms of both art and story ideas in its early years. As time went by, the



Extremely hard to find in grade, *Josie* #1 (Feb 1963, ABOVE) features classic gags typical of most Archie titles of the period.

A 25¢ giant *Josie And The Pussycats* #58 (RIGHT) featured "Voodoo Swamp", one of the classic mystery covers of the era... complete with swamp, screaming blonde ("AAAIEEEEEE!!"),and a spanish moss-laden skull.

Josie And The Pussycats #50 (OPPOSITE) sing out to promote the CBS TV show.



series changed, dropping some of the original characters, and taking on some new ones. New writers were brought in, and, sadly, so were new artists. By the time Josie received it greatest exposure (thanks to the highly successful cartoon based on the comic series), DeCarlo's level of involvement had been reduced. He no longer contributed the story ideas he once did, and artistic duties were often assigned to lesser talents.

Josies published during the early Seventies still had a great deal to offer, however. Thanks in part to the cartoon, the series had a new cast of established characters which were redefined by some of Archie's better writers. New types of stories were tried, including some brilliant light-hearted features and a few reasonably effective horror tales. DeCarlo's art also changed. Seventies' fashions and mores allowed him to draw characters with an aggressive style and sexuality that doubtfully will ever be matched. In spite of vastly inferior work produced by other artists (in my opinion) the early 1970s featured Josie at its best.

The book lost much of its edge by the end of the '70s, but DeCarlo returned to produce much of its artwork. Although still enjoyable, the title basically hobbled to its 1982 cancellation. The series was eventually picked up by the *Archie Giant Series Magazine* title, but that was canceled as well.

So, is the Josie series dead and forgotten? No, not quite...

I recently had the good fortune to meet the Hernandez brothers when the Love and Rockets Anniversary Tour brought them through North Carolina. I commented to Jaime how Penny Century reminded me of Josie's Melody. A warm glint of recognition flashed in his eyes as he admitted to me that not only was Penny inspired by Melody, but Maggie was inspired by Josie... and Hoppy, by Pepper. Jaime has often called his women the Betty and Veronica of tomorrow, but in truth they are the Pussycats Archie could never publish.

And what of Dan DeCarlo? Dan DeCarlo's workload at Archie isn't what it once was, which suits him just fine, thank you. His name has popped up in the pages of *Penthouse Comix*, and rumor has it he is producing a new series for an independent publisher that will be a shocking departure from anything he has done previously. My reaction? Personally, I can't wait. I grew up tracing the man's work, trying to capture its every nuance and unique warmth. I never could draw like him (and I probably never will), but I have a complete and total respect for his talent. ■

Special mention should be made of the Stan Goldberg artwork. Rather scratchy and a bit over-inked, it is amazingly effective.

FAN FAVORTES COME AND GO DECARLO IS FOREVER
Pussycat, Pussycat, Where Are You?
Josies Worth Looking For

"The Mudslinger", Josie #22
Alex and Alexandria become superheroes to impress Josie and Albert It doesn't work

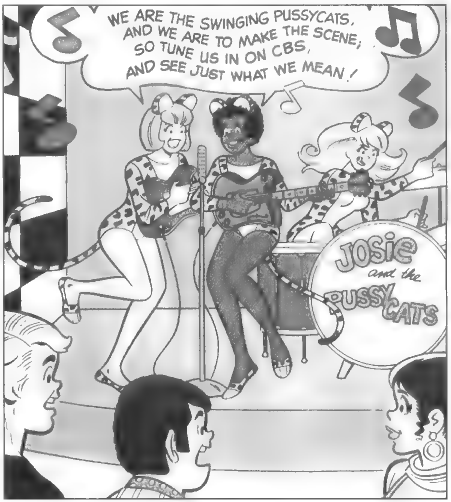
Devastatingly funny, this story is one of the best Josie tales ever and a truly funny superhero parody. Also of interest is the issue's cover. It features the Shield and the Fly. If you look close, you might spot Superman and Batman as well.

"Trouble", Josie #38
Josie meets her old friend Dan DeCarlo and introduces him to Melody. The yarn is a rehashing of a plot that the series used time and time again, but DeCarlo's presence as a character gives it a refreshing touch

"Quiet On The Set", Josie #50
The Pussycats meet Joseph Barbera and William Hanna. While the DeCarlo art is nice, the story isn't much. This issue is a must for Pussycat collectors, however. Not only does it feature a tour of Hanna-Barbera studios, but it also contains the house ad Archie ran to promote the cartoon, and a nice DeCarlo cover hyping the show

"That Magic Melody", Josie #63
Melody becomes a Native American tribe's golden goddess and the Pussycats become its human sacrifices Although politically incorrect, the story is still a delightful misadventure full of clever one-liners and superb DeCarlo Good Girl Art It's highly recommended

"My Brother's Keeper", Josie #65
This tale is written in a simple style reasonably appropriate for young children, but its plot is an entirely different story The merry situations it documents include scenes of domestic abuse, bondage, and occult-related deaths Surprisingly violent and morbidly fascinating, this is a story that probably should not have seen print


WE ARE THE SWINGING PUSSYCATS, AND WE ARE TO MAKE THE SCENE, SO TUNE US IN ON CBS, AND SEE JUST WHAT WE MEAN!
JOSIE and the PUSSYCATS

Josie and the Pussycats
Long tales and
ears for hats
Guitars and sharps
and flats
Neat, sweet a groovy song,
you're invited, come
along...hurry hurry
See you all in Persia,
maybe France
We could be in India,
or perchance
Be with us in Bangkok
makes no difference
Everywhere the actions at
We're involved with this
and that
Come along now...
Josie and the Pussycats
No time for purring cats
Won't run when they hear scat!
They're where the plot
begins...Yeah Yeah
Come on along, look out we're
Josie and the Pussycats...
Josie and the Pussycats
YEAAAAH

It's Not Square To Enjoy HARVEY SQU

It is entirely possible that Harvey Comics produced more squarebound comic books than any other publisher... including Dell!

Harvey's *Little Dot Dotland*, *Little Lotta Foodland*, and *Baby Huey in Duckland* the names of these books, as well as many others, conjure up images of fantasy worlds unique and inviting. And for those more familiar with these books, a nice, thick, squarebound, comic book filled with stories to enjoy on a rainy day or on a long car trip. When shopping for comics, the squarebound giants were always more of a bargain. I mean, why pay 10¢, 12¢, or 15¢ for a 36-page book, when for only a quarter, you could enjoy a 52, 68, or 84-page giant!

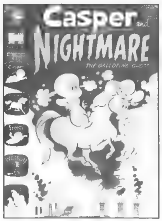
Though most comic book companies have at one time or another produced squarebound giants, it is entirely possible that Harvey Comics produced more squarebound comic books than any other publisher including Dell. No other publisher had at least one giant as a companion book to a regular 36-page title. And, many of the titles like Richie Rich Success did not feature reprints as was the norm for many giants!

The following is a listing of all known 68 and 84-page squarebound Harveys published 1958-71, followed by a listing of the best ones to seek out. Issues not annotated on this list are only 52 pages and may or may not be squarebound.

By
Mark Arnold

Mark Arnold is the editor and publisher of "The Harveyville Fun Times", a quarterly publication devoted to the Harvey World. It is not squarebound, but it is a "giant" among fanzines.

AREBOUNDS!



Baby Huey in Duckland 1-15
Baby Huey, The Baby Giant 80-95
Black Cat 63-65
Blondie and Dagwood Family 1-4
Blondie Comics 100, 148-163 (various issues)
Bunny 1-17
Casper and Nightmare (Nightmare and Casper) 1-32
Casper's Ghostland 1-61 (first 10 issues 84 pages)
Dagwood Comics 129-140 (various issues)
Devil Kids 41-50
Dick Tracy 145
Famous TV Funday Funnies 1
Fighting American 1
Fruitman Special 1
Harvey Pop Comics 1-2
Hi-School Romance Datebook 1-3
Hot Stuff Sizzlers 1-45 (first 5 or so issues 84 pages)
Joe Palooka 116
Little Audrey Clubhouse 1
Little Audrey TV Funtime 1-31
Little Dot's Uncles & Aunts 1-37
Little Lotta Foodland 1-26
Mutt & Jeff Jokes 1-3 (all 84 pgs)
Mutt and Jeff New Jokes 1-4
Richie Rich Dollars & Cents 1-43
Richie Rich Millions 1-48
Richie Rich Success Stories 1-38
Rock Happening 1-2
Sad Sack Laugh Special 1-60 (first 10 or so issues 84 pgs)
Sad Sack's Army Life Parade 1-34
Sad Sad Sack World 1-31
Spirit 1-2
Spooky Spooktown 1-39
Stumbo Tinytown 1-13
TV Casper and Company 1-31
Wendy Witch World 1-39

In my opinion, the best issues to seek out of all of these are *Famous TV Funday Funnies*, *Spirit*, and *Fruitman Special*, but all are worth seeking out not only because of their squarebound format, but because of the stories they contain and/or their comparative rarity. Or try *Stumbo Tinytown*, the only title to truly live up to the name "giant"!

In 1971, Harvey decreased the number of pages in their squarebound titles from 68 to 52 pages. These first few 52-pagers were also squarebound, but by 1972, all giants became saddle-stitched (or stapled on the spine).

Although Harvey ceased publishing squarebounds in 1971, they did not give up on giants until nearly a decade later. By that time, a "giant" was only 52 pages, a far cry from the larger epics that appeared before. One latter day exception was "Richie Rich Zillionz" which was 68 pages for its first four issues in 1976, but these were saddle-stitched and not squarebound.

The death knell of the Harvey squarebound giant was basically due to paper shortages, skyrocketing paper prices, and the creation the comics digest… of a format that still exists to this day. As a sidenote, Archie Comics continued to publish their "Archie Giant" until 1992, but for the last 10 or so years of its existence, the comic was a "giant" in name only as they only contained 36 pages.

So the next time you are at a comic shop, try a Harvey giant, and you may find yourself going, hey… these Harvey giants are really square. . bound that is! ■

CARTOON MUSEUM GRAND OPENING

Friday, March 8, 1996 — Boca Raton, Florida

BELOW: Two of Hanna-Barbera's most famous characters — Yogi Bear and Boo Boo Bear — welcome Bill Grandey.

YOGI BEAR & BOO BOO BEAR © ... HANNA-BARBERA. INC.

ABOVE: Ming The Merciless is flanked by Bill Grandey, Peter Merolo, John Snyder, and Rob Hall.

MING THE MERCILESS © KING FEATURES SYNDICATE

ABOVE: Rob Hall and Steve Geppi help one of Warner Brothers' best known birds — Tweety Pie — practice a well known phrase... "I tawt I taw a puddy tat!"

TWEETY PIE © 1996 WARNER BROS. INC.

BELOW: Allan Caplan (owner of Inkworks) and Steve Geppi honor Walt Disney's internationally known superstar, Mickey Mouse, by "putting on their ears" for the cameras.

... WALT DISNEY PRODUCTIONS

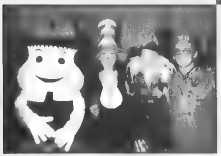
ABOVE: John Snyder, President of Diamond International Galleries welcomes Marvel legend Stan Lee to the grand opening.

NANCY © 1996 UNITED FEATURES SYN., CAT IN THE HAT © 1996 TED GEISEL
WIZARD OF OZ © 1996 MGM

ABOVE: Peter Merolo discusses the history of Batman, Robin, and the Joker with Golden Age artist Jerry Robinson.

JOKER © 1996 DC

BETTY BOOP © 1996 MAX FLEISCHER STUDIOS



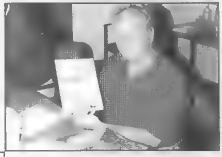
LEFT: Fans in costume pose for the camera... Nancy, The Cat In The Hat, the Scarecrow from the Wizard of Oz, and the Riddler!
RIGHT: Betty Boop flirts with Will Eisner, architect of the Golden Age, and John Snyder.

GRADING COMMITTEE–SOTHEBY'S '96

Friday through Sunday, March 22-24, 1996 — New York City

BELOW: The American Association of Comicbook Collectors 1996 Authenticity, Certification, and Grading Committee for Sotheby's Comic Art Auction.

LEFT: Jim Payette records individual restoration comments on the master ballots.



BELOW: Bruce Edwards completes the grading of a large run of high-grade Fiction House. Accurate grading of large lots is no easy task, as any committee member will tell you.

ABOVE: AACC President, Jon Berk, poses with one of the many rare items in the auction—the "ashcan" of *Flash Comics* #1 from DC.

BELOW: New York collector Mike Dalessandro evaluates a high-grade Silver Age DC lot.

STANDING ABOVE: Tony Davis, Jim Payette, Gary M. Carter, Michael Naiman, Jon Berk, Dan Greenhalgh, Bruce Edwards, Mike Dalessandro. SEATED: Nick Wroblesky and Susan Cicconi.

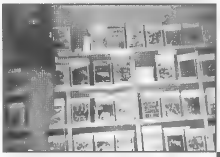
BELOW: Michael Naiman enters ballot data that will be averaged and eventually published in the 1996 Sotheby's auction catalog.

BELOW: Showcase New England owner, Dan Greenhalgh shows Michael Naiman his Marvel cover art re-creations, after auction grading and en route to visit the Jon Berk collection.

ABOVE: Jerry Weist, Sotheby's Auction Consultant (Comic Book/Comic Art), wife Dana Hawks-Weist, and their son Ian. The trio greet the ACG committee on the steps of their Brooklyn, New York brownstone.

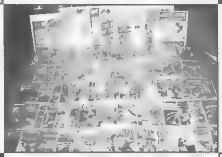
THE JON BERK COLLECTION

Visited Monday, March 25, 1996 — Hartford, Connecticut



BELOW: On a small area rug, Jon lays out $1,000,000 worth of rare comics. The "pile" includes: Action 1-3, All Star 3, All Winners 1, All American 16, Capt. America 1, Crack 1, Daring Myst. 1, Daredevil 1, Detective 1 & 27, (CONT. BELOW)

ABOVE: Fresh from the bank safety depost vault, Jon joyfully sorts through a myriad of boxes... each containing an amazing assortment of comicbook treasures.



ABOVE: At first Jon protested, but eventually agreed to be "buried" in key books. Jon confided that he had never been motivated by investment... only his love of the comics.

Exciting 9, Fantastic 1 & 3, Flash 1, Hit 1 & 5, Human Torch 2, Jumbo 1, Marvel 1, Marvel Myst. 2, Master 1, Pep 1, Planet 1, Police 1, Silver Streak 1 & 6, Smash 1, Sub-Mariner 1, Whiz 2, Wonder 1, and New York Worlds Fair 1939.

ABOVE: Jon displays part of his incredible collection of "oversized" comics... New Fun 1-6, More Fun 7-8, Jumbo 1-8, and Master 1-6.

BELOW: Jon snaps a picture of his three visitors–Gary M. Carter, Dan Greenhalgh, and Michael Naiman.

ABOVE: Jon and Gary continue their never ending debate over which came first... Marvel Mystery #1 or Motion Picture Funnies Weekly #1.

BELOW: Jon framed against a wall of original comic art.

ABOVE: Jon reads Superman #139 (Aug 1960) containing the story "The new life of Super-Merman." This is the only comic his parents didn't throw away when he was a kid. Jon still reads it occasionally for inspiration.

CARL BARKS' 95TH BIRTHDAY

Wednesday, March 27, 1996 — Timonium, Maryland

BELOW: Documentarians Jim and Tom Barker taped the entire gala as part of the Barks archives.

ABOVE: Birthday party host, Steve Geppi, poses with guest of honor Carl Barks and Barks fan Jeff Smith.

ABOVE: The "better halves" of two collecting dynasties... Mandy Matetsky (wife of collector Harry Matetsky), and Wendy Hall (wife of collector Rob Hall). The Barks painting in the backgound was part of the largest Barks showing in history.

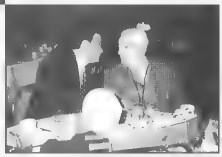
BELOW: Nationally known collector, dentist, and owner of the Mile High copy of *Action Comics* #1... Dave Anderson of Virginia. To his right, Diamond International Gallery comic expert Deanna Palumbo. Both were wowed by the event.

ABOVE: Charming as ever, Jennifer and Scott Whaley admire one of the many Barks paintings on display. Scott is the buying half of the Rosenberg/Whaley comic collectibles mail order company.

ABOVE: Joe Verenault (standing), Steve Fishler, Robert Rogovin, and CBM technical consultant, Arnie Sawyer discuss the latest issue of the Comic Book Marketplace over cocktails just before the birthday festivities begin.

LEFT: Jeff Smith (Bone), Maggie Thompson (CBG), and Mike Richardson (Dark Horse) enjoy the Barks birthday party bash.

RIGHT: Steve Geppi congratulates Carl on his nearly century-long award-winning career.



Competitive dealers... and collectors?

Here we find ourselves just shy of WonderCon and dealers are busy putting together inventory that collectors are looking for, and therein lies the perennial problem... buying new material for inventory to keep collectors happy. . balanced against the often oppressive problem of paying too high and not staying in business. The consensus seems to be that collectors are reluctant to sell their prized Golden Age and high grade Silver Age, and dealers are reluctant to pay the high prices asked by those willing to sell. In regards to the Post Golden Age books, it does make a dealer very comfortable when they pay "just below" market prices for key books and then price them "just at market" prices... especially when all along the Guide sets the value of these books at 4x - 6x less than the books are valued by collectors in the marketplace. (The same thing applies to the '70s books, but on a smaller dollar value scale.) Dealers and collectors are compelled, more than ever, to know exactly what the market is doing. If they don't, they won't feel comfortable with sellers prices. This translates to an unwillingness to purchase, and thus we don't see those new books at the conventions or in the catalogues.

Another trend both dealers and collectors are noticing is an undercurrent of "extreme competitiveness" amongst the various dealers when it comes to obtaining scarce 1938 - 1953 material and even high grade Silver Age books. This competitron has certainly always been there... but many feel that the level of "nastiness" shown by some is really damaging everyone in the hobby. Livelihoods are threatened by this infighting and unfortunately collectors suffer from a lack of material diversity and even some reduced availability.

Golden Age

No insult, but if your books fall into the "Oddball" heading, they have become very desirable by a growing segment of the market. Even a Golden Age Captain America or Batman will tend to show up at the smaller conventions. yet when was the last time you saw a nice copy of Whirlwind #1 at even the largest conventions? Pre Golden Age is now becoming a familiar request by collectors, and if we thought it was difficult to be a More Fun or All Select collector, just try to find one of the rare examples of comic book history below that recently sold.

Sales: Hit #5 (App.) FN++ $1,250; Kid Comics #5 FN+ $265; Planet Comics #48 FN $165; Startling Comics #20 VF+ $310; Batman #23 (App.) VF $1,100; Detective #99 G $170; Ace 26 FN $800; Target V#4 #6 VF/NM $115; Blondie #1 FN $185; Four Color #87 VF $200, Whiz #18 VF/NM $1,450; Captain America #39 (App) VF $550, All Winners #6 FN++ $780, All-Star #24 VG $310, USA #5 (App) FN $425; Mystery Men #8 VG/FN $700, Rangers #69 VF+ $160; All-Flash #3 VG+ $595, Green Lantern #18 FN+ $265

Silver Age

Remember when we were on the cusp of 1992/93 and we heard the rumblings of a Golden Age comeback? It was very quiet and by the time most of us began to seriously consider getting into the Golden Age, prices were already at multiples of Guide and climbing higher everyday. Remember also that few dealers and collectors went on record as saying that it was just a ploy to boost values of the Golden Age books and a way for those to sell that didn't have any Silver? Silver is making a comeback and those that are ready for it will be amply rewarded. Early high grade Silver in true VF/NM and NM is truly a difficult thing to come by at "realistic" prices. Those that have recognized that fact are already having fun.

Sales: Sea Devils #3 FN $70; Mission Impossible #1 NM $100; Mystery In Space #75 FN+ $98; Our Army At War #91 FN $170; Star Spangled War Stories #94 NM $145; *(continued on page 67)*

MARKET REPORTS

JOHN FAIRLESS

THE GREAT ESCAPE

Wake Village, Texas

Greetings from Cowboy Country! Well, with a shaky start to our new convention season a blizzard in Philly, NY being canceled as we arrived .. and a miraculous, overnight production of the now infamous "Church" Con (great job Mike and Vinnie- very impressive) one might get the impression that the market was suffering. NOT SO, actually, quite the opposite has been true! This year is off to a great start!!

Golden Age is still strong, 50's esoteric is doing great, and the Silver Age is even flourishing in high grade, and the lesser grades at 80-90% of Guide. Wonder Woman and Sensation still fly in any grade. Frazetta, Schomburg, and Barks books are in high demand. Older toys and collectibles are also selling very briskly at top prices.

Here are some of the highlights of the year so far. Action #6 FN/VF (R) $2,800, Captain America #3 VG/FN $3,200, #5 FN/VF (C/P) $2,850, #8 VG/FN (CT) $800, #9 FN $1,150, #11 FN+ $1,100, #12 GD $500, #17 GD $400, Batman #42 VF $850; Black Terror #24 VF $355, Detective #45 VF (R) $1800, #83 VF+ $900, #88 (Mile High) $2,100; Monster Comics #1 VF $800; Mickey Mouse Magazine V5 #12 GD $750; Silver Streak VG/FN $1,700; Teen-Age Dope Slaves #1 FN+ $550, Walt Disney's Comics & Stories #2 VG $1400, Hulk #1 VF $7,000, #1 PR/GD $600, Tales Of Suspense #41 VF/NM $900, X-Men Giant Size #1 NM $500, #94 NM $450

Here's to a great year and happy hunting!

(Market Reports continued on page 66

IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, WE HAVE

$PENT MILLION$

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TIM COLLINS • RTS UNLIMITED, INC.
GOLDEN • COLORADO

The first hints of Spring have arrived in colorful Colorado! These hints also bring a wave of optimism about expanding our hobby. I recently had a young man stop by the warehouse seeking donations for a youth organization. As he entered my warehouse his eyes lit up and he noted how much fun it must be to be surrounded by so many comics. The youngster only had a cursory familiarity with comics and said he wanted to start collecting. After a brief exchange, I soon sent him on his way with a few free comics to get him started. Hopefully, he will become a lifelong fan and show the four-color goodies I gave him to his friends so they too will become enchanted!

This month's Great Eastern convention was by and large a disappointment for dealers in newer books. One dealer lamented at price resistance he experienced for back issues over $30. There is hope! Finally, many collectors seem to be realizing that the vast majority of recent comics may go up very fast but then decline just as fast (if not faster!). Dealers that focus on Golden Age and Silver Age books fared much better.

. Other trends I noticed at this show .. (1) Wonder Woman issues continue to sell strongly at double Guide in all grades; (2) a number of collectors are buying low grade reading copies. I've found it almost easier to sell Poors and Fairs than higher grade books. Typically, I sell Fairs for only about 25% less than what I would charge for Good; (3) There also seems to be renewed interest in Cerebus; (4) The Silver Age key most often asked for (from me anyway) is currently Journey Into Mystery #83.

I have recently acquired some really neato comics: a nice unrestored copy of More Fun #73 (first Aquaman), New Comics #1, three high grade copies of X-Men #1, and a nigh flawless Amazing Spider-Man #14 *(continued on page 68)*

BILL HUGHES • EXECUTIVE COLLECTIBLES • NEWPORT BEACH • CALIFORNIA

On Sunday March 10, 1996, Executive Collectibles held their annual "Spring Extravaganza" Auction of comic book and comic art collectibles. Concluding their successful 2 day auction (which included rock and roll memorabilia, sports collectibles, and movie posters) the much anticipated comic book portion of the auction attracted dealers and collectors from around the nation to bid on the over 400 lots. Material included Mile High copies of Thrilling Comics and many examples of Disney material from the Poughkeepsie collection. The following results include the buyers premium:

Adventure Comics #97 VF/NM $690; All American #1 VG $1,035, #22 GD+/VG $258.75; #25 GD $862.50; #26 GD+/VG $172.50; All Great Jungle Adventures nn VF/NM $373.75; All-Star #14 FN+/VF $690, #18 VF+ $1,495, All Star #21 VG+/FN $690; #29 VF+ $747.50; Amazing Fantasy #15 VF/NM $15,525, #15 App FN+/VF $2,875; #15 App. VF $3,162.50; Amazing Spider-Man #1 FN+/VF $2,300; #14 VF+ $1,380; America's Greatest Comics #1 VG+/FN $373.75; Atomic Comics #1 App. VF/NM $920; Avengers #1-10 FN the lot $1,265, Avengers #4 VF $920;

Batman #2 App. FN $2,070, #5 App. FN+ $1,380, #6 FN/VF $1,380, #9 App FN- $632.50, #16 VG+ $920, #27 VF+ $1,035, #24, 29, 36 VG the lot $575, #26 & 27 VG the lot $517.50, #46 VF $373.75; Batman LN's $258.50 Big Shoe's $0 [illegible] NM Mile High the lot $1,150; Black Terror #1 FN $575, Blue Beetle #34, 35, 36 VF+/NM (Mile High) the lot $1,150; Boy Commandoes #1 VG+/FN $690; Boy Explorers #1 FN $230; Brave & Bold #28 FN+ $2,875; Captain America #1 FN $12,650, #10 FN+/VF $2,070; Captain Atom #1 VF $1,725; Captain Marvel Adventures #3 VG+ $345, #11 FN+ $373.75; Captain Marvel Storybook #1 VF $264.50 Captain Science #1-4 FN/VF the lot $632.50.

Donald Duck Tells About Kites 1954 VF/NM $2,300; Detective #27 App. FN+ $37,375, #48 FN/FN+ $402.50, #93 FN/VF $460; Donald Duck Fun Book #1 NM $517.50; Donald Duck's Atom Bomb nn FN $316.25; Famous Funnies #210 VF+ $747.50; Fantastic Four #6 VF $575; Flash Comics #1 App. FN $9,775; Flash #105 App. VF $920; Four Color #386 VF (Poughkeepsie) $1,150, #108 VF (Poughkeepsie) $862.50, #147 NM (Poughkeepsie) $862.50, #178 VF (Poughkeepsie) $862.50, #199 NM (Poughkeepsie) $1,265, #203 NM (Poughkeepsie) $575, #256, 291 NM (Poughkeepsie) the lot $747.50, #9 FN+/VF $3,450, #16 FN/VF $5,750; Four Favorites #7,8,26 VF+/NM (Mile High) the lot $1,035;

Heroic Comics #4 VF/NM $258.75, #6 VF $201.25; Holiday Comics #1 FN+/VF $345, House of Mystery #1 VF $546.25; Human Torch #29 VF $546.25, Ibis the Invincible #3 VF $287.50, Justice League of America #1 App. FN+/VF $977.50, #1 FN $488.75; Large Feature #16 FN $1,092.50; Leading #5 FN+/VF $431.25; Marvel Family #1 VG+ $258.75, Marvel Mystery Comics #6 VG+/FN $920, #68 VF $488.75; Master Comics #1 App. FN+ $1,725, #14 FN+ $201.25; Mickey Mouse Magazine V1#1 VG+/FN $16,100, V3 #3 NM (Poughkeepsie) $1,265, V3#5 VF/NM (Poughkeepsie) $1,035, V4#7 VF/NM (Poughkeepsie) $488.75, V4#10 NM (Poughkeepsie) $1,092.50, V5#12 VF/NM (Poughkeepsie) $2,875; More Fun #61 App. FN $402.50, #63 VG $431.25, #64 App. VG $373.75, #69 FN+/VF $920, #74 FN $632.50, #101 App. FN+/VF $2,300;

New Adventure #12 VG/FN $690; Nickel Comics #1 VF $488.75; Pep Comics #16 FN $287.50; Phantom Lady #13 FN/VF $747.50, #16 FN/VF $431.25; Planet Comics #8 VF/NM $805, #21 VF

$632.50, #41. 55 VF the lot $345, #42. 45 VF/NM the lot $460, #50. 59 VF/VF+ the lot $345. #51. 57 FN/VF the lot $316.25; Police Comics #24 NM (Mile High) $1,495; Red Raven #1 App. FN+/VF $2 300; Rulah #21 VF $402 50; Showcase #4 App. FN $4,025, #8 VG+/FN $2,587.50, #22 VG+ $460; Slam Bang #1 VF- $402.50, #6 NM (Mile High) $977.50, #7 NM/MT (Mile High) $862.50;

Space Ghost #1 VF+ $431.25; Spy Smasher #6 VF- $402.50; Star Spangled #2 FN/VF $632.50, #17. 21, 26 VG the lot $546.25, #23 VF- $402.50; Star Trek (Gold Key) #1-61 VF/NM the lot $3,105. Stuntman #1 VF/NM $1,035; Superman #4 GD+/VG $575, #10 VG $460, #11 FN+ $776.25, #14 VG $690, #22. 24. 28 VG the lot $575; Superman's Christmas Adventure. 1940 App FN+/VF $690, 1944 FN $230; Superworld Comics #1940 GD/VG $575; Tales To Astonish #1 VG+ $345; Target Comics V5#4, V6#2, 4-6, 8, 9 NM (Mile High) the lot $920, V7#2-12 NM (Mile High) the lot $1,380; The Comics #5 FN $149.50; The Funnies #45 FN $201.25;

Man from Planet X FN+ $575; Thrilling #30, 32, 36, 39 NM (Mile High) the lot $2,242.50, #40, 42, 43, 45 NM (Mile High) the lot $2,070. #41, 44 VF+/NM (Mile High) the lot $1,725, #52-56 VF+/NM (Mile High) the lot $2,415; Top-Notch Comics #1 VG+ $402.50, #9 VG $488.75; Walt Disney's Comics & Stories #2-4 GD+/VG the lot $977.50 #5-8 FN+/VF the lot $1,840, #9-12 FN the lot $1,092 50, #13-18 FN+/VF the lot $1,035, #19-24 FN+/VF the lot $747.50, #25-30 FN+/VF the lot $632.50, #41-50 GD/FN the lot $402.50, #140 NM $115;

Weird Comics #4 VF+ $747 50,. #16 VF $287 50. Whiz #25 VF- $3,162 50. Wonder Woman #1 VG- $3,162.50, #9 VF/NM $747.50, #27 VF $287.50; World's Finest #6 FN $402 50 , #7 VF $747 50, #8 FN+ $517.50.

Adventure #253 VG+ $60; Four Color #1152 FN $95; Journey Into Mystery #83 FN $770, Amazing Adult Fantasy #7 VF $485; Silver Surfer #4 NM $495, Detective #327 VF+ $98, X-MEN #15 VF- $130; Amazing Spider-Man #100 NM $180, #51 VG $50, Brave & Bold #1 VG+ $420, #28 GD $350, Wonder Woman #192 NM $92, #193 NM $92, Showcase #34 FN $385, #3 (App) VF $550, , Strange Adventures #160 VF $48, Star Trek #1 FN $180, Fantastic Four #28 FN $79, Rip Hunter #29 NM $70, Spectre #2 NM $70, Spyman #1 VF $89

1946-56 Material

For those that are looking for only a slightly better chance of locating a given book, this segment of the market is it! Every day a new surprise is brought to my attention For example, All Picture Comedy #1 (1952, St John) s a collection of four rebound comics. This issue is a thick 100 pages and has a cover that anyone would walk right by . BUT it has some of the very best Matt Baker Romance t tles inside. Books like this are brought to the attention of the market and the market responds enthusiastically. Many of these revelations are a kept secret of some collectors, so any info you can share with fandom via CBM is always appreciated

Sales Western True Crime #16 (#2) FN $80, Four Color #574 VF $75, Jo Jo #16 NM $425, Rulah #20 NM $670; Seven Seas #1 VG $185; Little Miss Sunbeam #1 FN $65; Romantic Story #14 VF/NM $40, Homer The Happy Ghost #1 VF $120, Dark Mysteries #10 FN $98, Headline #41 VF/NM $75; Superman #53 (App.) FN $550; National #75 VF $120 Black Phantom #1 FN/VF $185; Dell Giant Christmas Parade #2 VF $300; Dead Who Walk VF $325, Four Color Tonto #312 (#1) VF- $120; Wanted Comics #18 VF/NM $240; Phantom Lady #13 GD $410.

1970s Material

Collectors that are interested in collecting the '70s books are having an increasingly difficult time locating a good selection of books from most dealers Unfortunately there is still a breakdown of communication between some dealers and some collectors. Granted, there are a few dealers that do not handle this genre and have no interest in doing so, but there are a few long time dealers out there that are sitting on a great inventory of books, but have yet to find the motivation (read profit) to dig these once "bargain bin books" out of storage. Many of the same are trying to sell slower moving mid grade books in the $10-30 range, when they have stocks of NM '70s books that would literally fly out the door, if made available. In this increasingly fragmented market, dealers cannot carry everything so collectors must ask to clearly communicate demand for these books.

Sales Night Nurse #3 NM $45; Ghosts #31 NM $39; Four Star Battle Tales #1 $10, Phantom Stranger #23 NM $12; Adv #435 NM $8, Batman #234 NM $125; Iron Man #54 VF/NM $28, Daredev #105 NM $12.00, #158 NM $72; X-Men Giant Size #1 VF $295, Unknown Soldier #205 NM $15, The Cat #1 NM $18, Avengers #83 VF/NM $18, #87 VF/NM $35, Western Marvel Team Up #1 NM $10, Action #440 NM $11, Tomb Of Dracula #1 NM $48, World's Finest #215 VF/NM $25, Am Spider Man #196 NM, $18 Hulk #181 FN $295, From Beyond The Unknown #1 NM $95.00

If it's been "cold" then what's hot?

By chance, did anyone read the piece on collecting and collectibles that ran in the New York Sunday Times a few weeks ago? The upshot is that collectibles are becoming hot once again, and the baby boomer masses are looking for nostalgia and also a place to put their disposable income with a potential profit Needless to say, if "collectibles" have been cold over the past decade, we are all in for quite an awakening in comics and our related "comic stuff" It will be interesting to see how our insular hobby reacts to this infusion that was destined to come sooner than later Even my monthly Gasoline Company bill contains a hilarious offer for a "starter pack" for collecting and investing in comics. Good luck this Spring. ■

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GREG WHITE • COMIC BOOKS & COLLECTIBLES• KISSIMMEE • FLORIDA

Hello! Our report this month centers on the Orlando Mega Con that concluded this past weekend. This is the largest show in Florida and tells much about the present state of the industry. A wide variety of product was represented at this show. Golden Age and Silver Age comic books were in abundance, including most of the key issues. Original artwork included works by Ditko, Kirby, Frazetta, Walt Kelly, Barks, Al Avison, Sheily Moldoff, and many others. Vintage toys ran the gamut from Superman premiums to Captain Action dolls.

Attendance by older seasoned collectors was marginal. It would have been nice if more people came through the door with money to purchase pre-1970 collectibles. Many books sold in the $50 to $300 range. That was the correct market to target at this convention. I spoke with the majority of dealers handling vintage material and no one reported any single item sales above $1,000. The big money just was not present. Many of the larger out of state dealers that planned on moving a few "heavy" books must have gone home disappointed. The show itself was very well organized and efficient. The panel discussions and autograph sessions were orderly and on time. The promoters can be proud of the job they did. All shows should run this smooth-ly!

The only real complaints during the show related to the surprise appearance of legendary artist Frank Frazetta. According to many dealers and collectors that we spoke with, Frank allegedly had no interest in meeting and speaking to his many fans. We were told that Mr. Frazetta cruised the room and would mingle with "industry types" but allegedly made it clear that he had no time or interest in greeting the many collectors on hand who had supported his various projects over the years. Many of the collectors who voiced their opinions to us were not autograph hounds... they simply would have like to have said hello. Our opinion is that it was terrific that he showed up at our show and that it certainly was a thrill to see this living legend. Other convention guests that drew in an older crowd included Sheily Moldoff, Martin Nodell, John Romita, and George Perez. A good time was had with all these personable and grateful artists.

Convention sales include the following: Amazing Spider-Man #1 GD $690, Fantastic Four #7 FN $295, World's Finest #16 VG $190, #3 VF $700 plus trade, Classic Comics #33 VG $120; Batman #48 VG $160, Flash #137 VF $195, Marvel Mystery #19 VG $500.

All in all, it was an interesting weekend. We look forward to next years show. I hope you'll plan any Florida vacations around Mega Con '97... plan to join us!

TIM COLLINS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 66

(first Green Goblin).

Tim's Tip of the Month: Tip #1: Don't leave your comic boxes partially empty. I've noticed that in partially full boxes that the comics may slide down a little bit and could easily get spine damage. My solution: fill your partially full box with anything that is convenient! Tip #2: I bet quite a few of you out there own a computer and have computer lists. Recently friends and acquaintances of mine have had their systems stolen or wiped out by viruses. If you use a computer to maintain inventories of your collection, (1) do you have back ups of your data? (2) Do you have software that scans for viruses? and (3) could you replace your system if it was stolen? Just a thought... Till next month: Read your funnybooks! ■

Collectors should note that the opinions expressed in CBM Market Reports are solely those of the individual dealers and collectors who contribute them. Comic book values and prices listed here are subject to the above conditions. Seasoned hobbiests are acutely aware that comic book and collectible prices and values vary based on geographic location, time of year, and a number of other marketplace factors.

SHOWCASE NEW ENGLAND

4 Center St., Wallingford, CT 06492, (203) 265-3466

Action
#2 ..... (Inquire)
#3 ..... (Inquire)
#4 ..... (Inquire)
#5 ..... (Inquire)
#6 ..... (Inquire)
#7 ..... (Inquire)
#8 ..... (Inquire)
#9 ..... (Inquire)
#10 ..... (Inquire)
#11 FN+ (MR,W) $1,400
#15 VF+ (LR, KE) $2,000
#16 VF+ (LR, KE) $1,200
#16 GD $350
#18 VF (LR, KE) $1,200
#30 VG+ $295
#33 VG $210
#34 VG/FN $325
#42 GD/VG $235
#71 VG/FN $135
#78 VF+ $500
#79 VG $110
#80 FN $385
#95 VF/NM $650
others .....(Inquire)

Adventure
#53 VF- (TS) $800
#54 VG (TP) $400
#55 FN/FN+ $750
#56 FN/VF $1,000
#58 FN- $500
#60 FN+70 .....$900
#62 FN/FN+ $750
#64 FN/FN+ $750
#66 VG+ (LR) $375
#69 FN/VF $950
#71 VG/VG+ (TP) $375
#87 VG $180
#94 VG $115
#97 VG $125
#98 VG $125
#101 FN $185
#104 VG/FN $235
#120 GD- $50
#140 VG+ $135
#170 FN+ $120
#194 VG $60
others .....(Inquire)

All American
#21 VG/FN $1,000
#40 FN/VF $600
#49 FN/VF $450
#73 VG $90

All Flash
#21 VG $90

All Star
#3 FN (MR, W) $6,000
#5 FN+ (LR) $1,400
#6 GD $300
#8 VF/NM (MR, W) $7,500
#11 VG+ $550
#12 FN+ $1 100
#13 FN+ $1 000
#18 GD+ (TP) $250
#19 VF79 .....$750
#20 VF80 .....$775
#20 VG $285
#23 VG/VG+ $325
#24 VG+50 .....$375
#26 FN/FN+ $500
#29 VF+89 .....$1 200
#30 VF82 .....$1,000
#30 VG+ $265
#31 FN- $325
#31 VG48 .....$245
#32 VF78 .....$600
#33 VF82 .....$3 000
#35 FN68 .....$360
#38 FN++ $450
#39 VG44 .....$210
#42 VG40 .....$185
#53 VF81 .....$850
#54 FR/GD $90

All Winners
#1 VF/VF+ $11,000
#3 VF/NM (CT) $2,400
#10 VG+ $295
#14 FN/VF $600

Amazing Man
#15 FN $190
#21 VG+ $120

Amazing Mystery Funnies
#1 VG (OS) $900

Batman
#1 FR+ (MR) $12,000
#2 FN/VF (TS, W) $6,500
#3 VF+ $6,000
#3 FN/FN+ $2,700
#3 VF+ (LR, W) $2,500
#4 VF/NM (MR, KE) $2,800
#5 VG+ (COVER) $400
#7 FN+ (LR, W) $800
#10 FN++ (TW) $1,300
#12 FN+ (LR, W) $600
#13 VF/NM $3,000
#13 FN- (NOC) $625
#14 VF (LR) $900
#14 GD (TS) $255
#15 VG $470
#17 VG $300
#19 FN/FN+ $550
#20 FN+ $575
#20 GD $160
#21 FN/FN+ $385
#24 VF/NM $1,400
#25 VG/FN $450
#26 VG/FN $310
#28 FN+ $385
#29 VF/NM $1,400
#29 FN+ $385
#31 VF $600
#32 GD+ $130
#33 VG/FN $285
#35 VF82 .....$700
#36 FN+ $325
#36 FN/FN+ $275
#36 VG/VG+ $185
#38 FN+ $385
#39 VF+ (TW) $1,200
#40 VG+ $285
#40 VG $230
#43 NM- (TW) $1,500
#43 VG $165
#44 VG/FN $295
#48 VG/VG+ $200
#48 GD $82
#50 VG $175
#51 VG- $160
#54 VG+ $170
#54 FR/GD $50
#60 GD/VG $135
#62 VG/FN $275
#67 GD $50
#71 GD/VG $82
#72 VG (TP) $110
#73 GD/VG (TP) $135
#78 GD $100
#92 VF+87 .....$550
#94 FN60 .....$130
#95 FN65 .....$145
#98 VF88 .....$500
#101 VG $80
#102 VG $80
#104 VF83 .....$375
#104 VG $80
#105 VG/VG+ $135
#106 VF85 .....$385
#106 VG $80
#107 VG/VG+ $90
#112 FN+ (CT) $100
#113 VG+ $65
#117 VG+ $75
#120 VF79 .....$165

Blackhawk
#108 VG/VG+ $110
#135 VG+ $16
#136 FN $21
#140 FN+ $27
#146 VG/FN $12
#156 FN- $13
#184 FN $5

Blue Beetle
#18 VF/NM (PA) $485
#22 VF/NM (PA) $350
#23 VF/NM (PA) $350
#27 VF/NM (PA) $325

Blue Ribbon #1 FN $685

Boy Commandos #1 FN $975

Captain America
#1 VG/FN (ER, W) $9,500
#1 VG/FN (TR, MR, KE) $8,500
#2 VF (CP) $6,000
#2 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) $1,800
#3 VG $2,000
#3 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) $1,600
#4 FN/VF (LR, W) $1,500
#4 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) $900
#5 FN60 (CP) $1,200
#6 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) $700
#7 VG+50 .....$1,050
#7 FN62 (CT) $1,000
#7 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) $750
#8 VF+ (LR, KE) $1,650
#8 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) $625
#9 FN/VF $2,100
#9 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) $625
#11 VF+ $1,450
#11 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) $525
#12 VG $675
#12 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) $485
#14 VF/VF+ $2,000
#17 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) $425
#38 VF $1,100
#43 FN+ $450
#45 VF+ $1,100
#45 VF78 .....$600
#50 VF/VF+ $1,000
#50 VF/VF+ $1,000
#53 VF (OS) $1,000
#59 VG $450

CMO Comics (Centaur)
#2 VG $125

Continued on Page 71

MARKETPLACE MAIL

Continued from page 13

What marvelous memories! I stopped buying new comics off the rack when I was fifteen (the last issues I recall purchasing are all dated around October 1964) and concentrated on Golden and post-Golden Age titles for a few more years, then drifted away from the hobby and ultimately sold my entire collection, including the Infantino original art I had won in Julius Schwartz's letter columns. I found my way back a few times, but really didn't return to collecting until about six years ago. It was great fun playing catch-up ball, as one of your correspondents describes it, and continues to be to this day.

I really wanted to commend you on your article on Murphy Anderson. He was one of my favorites during the Silver Age (I was a huge Schwartz fan, which meant the art of Infantino, Kane and Anderson, among others). Just a thought or two from the era: It's not quite true that he did every single Strange Adventures cover from August of 1961 on... if memory serves me, Gil Kane did the very un-DC like cover for SA #154. I'm not 100% sure about the covers for #136 (11/62) and #155 (8/63) but I can accept those as Anderson covers. Also, after issue #163 (4/64), Schwartz gave up editing the title and Mystery in Space in order to take over Batman, Detective, and the fledgling Hawkman, and since the writers and artists worked with particular editors at DC in those days, there were no more Anderson covers after that.

At the time I was quite disappointed that Schwartz was moving over to the Batman titles because I was a staunch fan of his science fiction mags and hated to see Jack Schiff and his, well, inferior staff of artists and writers take them over. It also meant the end of the Atomic Knights and those great covers. I also was originally happy that Anderson was going to draw Hawkman: first of all because it meant that the titles he inked for Kane and Anderson—Atom and Adam Strange—were going to be increasingly inked by the quirky Sid Greene, whom I did not like at the time. In retrospect, I have come to have a grudging affection for the guy's loopy, but friendly style. Why not an article on this forgotten, unsung artist sometime? Secondly, I was quite enamored of Joe Kubert's Hawkman and hoped he could stay on the character. That, of course, probably would not have happened, due to the proprietary territorial nature of DC's editors of the time regarding their creative people. I did not realize it at the time, but the very fact that Kubert had done a book in the early 60's for Julius Schwartz and not Robert Kanigher was almost miraculous. I still love the dark, murky mystery of Kubert's Katar Hol stories (plus I dug the way he drew the femme fatale Mavis Trent!). Murphy Anderson's characterization struck me as too much "in the light". Now, of course, with the perspective of the intervening years, I really enjoy looking back on those first issues of the Hawkman title. For my money, there has still never been a better inker than Murphy Anderson, whether he was doing his own pencils or those of another artist. And I still use him as a reference when I have to draw clouds—what great, billowy clouds the man could render!

It still strikes me as odd that no distinction is made in the price guides or elsewhere between pre-#163 (i.e. Schwartz) Strange Adventures and post-#163 issues, post-Schwartz, which for a while at least were absolutely abysmal; *(Continued on page 72)*

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#1 FN+ (CT, TR) $1,500

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#1 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) $3,200

Detective
#27 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) $42,000
#30 FN+ (MR, W) $2,000
#31 FN+ (LR, W, TW) $6,500
#32 FN57 (TW) $3,500
#33 FN/VF (TS, TW) $13,000
#34 FN+ (MR, W) $1,500
#35 FN/VF (LR, W, TW) ..$6,000
#35 GD/VG $2,000
#35 VG/FN (ER, W) $1,800
#36 FN/VF (LR, W, TW) ..$3,000
#36 VG+ (ER) $1,200
#37 FN/VF (LR, W, TW) ..$3,000
#37 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) ..$1,000
#38 FN/VF (TW) $12,000
#38 FN+ (MR, W) $6,000
#42 FN+ (TW) $1,000
#42 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) $375
#43 FN/VF $375
#43 VG $340
#44 VF (TW) $1,800
#44 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) $375
#44 GD+ $200
#45 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) $400
#45 GD/VG $350
#46 VF (TW) $1,500
#46 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) $335
#47 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) $335
#48 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) $335
#49 VG/VG+ $350
#49 FN/VF (TR, LR, KE) $335
#54 FN $400
#55 VG+ $290
#57 VG+ $285
#73 VF+ (TW) $1,100
#75 VG+ $220
#77 VG+ $220
#79 NM- (TW) $1,100
#83 GD $80
#86 GD+ $95
#90 NM (TW) $1,400
#90 VF+ $650
#92 VF+ $900
#93 VG $130
#95 VG+ $180
#100 VG/VG+ $250
#103 NM (TW) $1,200
#103 VG+ $145
#105 VG $125
#107 NM+ (TW) $1,200
#107 FN+ $250
#107 GD/VG $100
#111 FN+ $240
#113 FN $190
#123 VG+ $150
#127 NM (TW) $1,000
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#140 VG+ $1,400
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#142 VG $500
#143 NM (TW) $750
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#202 FN70 ..... $215

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#27 NM93 ..... $300
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#29 VF+88 ..... $275

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#21 FN/FN+ $475
#22 FN $425
#24 VF75 ..... $650
#27 VG+ (TP) $225
#36 FN $255
#41 VG+ $175
#58 VG/VG+ $135
#59 VG $120
#60 FN- $165
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#2 VG $1,000
#3 FN+ $1,350
#3 VG+ $1,100
#4 VG $675
#5 FN/VF (TS) $2,200
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Marvel Mystery
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#5 VF (CP) $5,000
#18 FN+ $875
#19 FN (TS, CT) $350
#28 FN69 ..... $475
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#68 VG $150
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#111 VG+ $35
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#113 VG $30
#125 VG- $110

Planet
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#2 FN/VF $3,500
#3 VG (AR) $400
#5 VG $550
#6 FN+ $1,000
#7 VG $375
#8 FN+ $650
#9 FN/VF $900
#10 VG $375
#11 VG+ $425
#13 VG $300
#14 GD/VG (TP) $175
#16 VF $1,000
#16 FN/VF $550
#21 FN/VF $750
#27 FN/VF $600
#40 FN+ $250
#42 FN+ $200
#50 VF/NM $450
#50 VG+ $175
#52 VF $350
#55 VF $70
#57 VF+ $350
#58 VG+ $125

Plastic Man (The Gav '90s)
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Police
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Popeye
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Real Fact
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Sub-Mariner (Golden Age)
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#2 FN/FN+ $1,800

Superman
#1 VG/FN (TR, MR, KE) ..$9,500
#2 FN+ (MR, W) $2,300
#5 FN++74 ..... $1,350
#6 FN/VF (CT) $950
#6 FN/VF (LR) $850
#7 VG49 ..... $575
#8 VG $425
#8 GD/VG (TP) $330
#8 GD+ $300
#8 FR/GD $200
#9 FN+ (MR, KE) $650
#10 VG- $385
#11 GD/VG (CP) $450

Continued on Page 73

or between pre-and post-#91 Mystery in Space issues for the same reason. I don't recall ever seeing an article or even a letter offering comment on the editorial shift of the time that to my mind ended the great run of Silver Age science-fiction. Maybe I'll write it one of these days soon...

A question: I remember an early issue of Mystery in Space that had a Gil Kane story about a man who metamorphoses into a grotesque human moth. It had a great effect on me as a kid and I even drew a similar character into a fanzine strip I submitted to G. B. Love. Anybody know what issue that was in? I'd love to find it again.

And finally, I owe Julius Schwartz a debt of gratitude because it was his kind attention to my myriad letters, and the beautiful work of his marvelous staff of artists—especially Murphy Anderson and Carmine Infantino—that nurtured my love for drawing and stoked my enthusiasm to one day become a professional artist myself.

Hey, thanks for the ear. It's fun to be back and I love the places you guys take me in every issue. Keep up the good work. Sincerely,

Tony Gleeson, California

My son and I recently read the "grotesque human moth" story in one of the later Strange Adventures reprint giants... but for the life of me I can't seem to find it, and the schedule this close to deadline precludes me from looking through my back issues of MS. Perhaps some astute DC Sci Fi collector can help us both out. I couldn't agree more with your comments... especially the "price cutoff" proposal for the post Schwartz-edited issues.

Cover-To-Cover Reader

I was really pleased to see CBM back on the market. In its first run I was a cover-to-cover reader (even the ads are good reading). It took me a while to get a regular order going through a local comic shop for the current series. I only got back on at issue #28 (and what a great issue to get back on too!). You folks should be proud of the quality magazine you're producing. Best wishes,

Bruce Guthrie, New South Wales, Australia

Cap The Commie Smasher

Eagerly look forward to reading Comic Book Marketplace every month. The articles are informative and entertaining. Issue #33 was no exception to this rule. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

In the letter column, Brian St. John asked if the Captain America story which was "retold" in Avengers #4, ever actually saw print. The story had Captain America, revived in 1964 from suspended animation after being frozen in a block of ice since World War II, tell The Avengers that Bucky was dead. He had been killed when a drone plane (onto which he was clinging) exploded. This was a plot device used by Stan Lee to revive Cap in the 60's and not have him be 20 years older. Stan ignored the last few years of Cap's Golden Age career.

Captain America left the Army for civilian life in Captain America #58 (Sept. '46) and in #60 (Jan. '47) he became a teacher at Lee High School. All this time Bucky was still his sidekick. Bucky's last appearance in the original run was in Captain America #66 (May '48). Bucky was "temporarily" replaced by Betsy Ross who became Golden Girl (an attempt to increase sales by adding some sex appeal). Bucky was wounded and agreed with Cap that Betsy should take his place until he had recovered. He never returned and Captain America was canceled after he fought the Red Skull in Captain America's Weird Tales #74 (Oct. '49). The addition of Weird Tales to Cap's titles was another attempt to increase sales by cashing in on the growing trend of horror titles. The final issue of the run, Captain America's Weird Tales #75 (Feb. '50) only had Cap's name on the cover. He didn't make an interior appearance.

Stan also ignored an abortive comeback Captain America made in the 1950's with Bucky at his side. He appeared in Young Men #24 (Dec. '53) for the first time in four years. He subsequently appeared in Young Men #25 (Feb. '54), #26 (March '54), #27 (April '54) and #28 (June '54). He also appeared in Men's Adventures #27 (May '54) and #28 (July '54). Cap's own title was revived for three issues, Captain America #76 (May '54), #77 (July '54), and #78 (Sept. '54). These issues had a cover blurb which touted Cap as "Captain America-Commie Smasher". Cap's patriotic name and costume made him a natural to combat the "Red Menace". After these appearances, Cap drifted into comic book limbo until Avengers #4 (March 1964).

I don't recall where I read it, but the appearances of Cap in the 1950's were explained away after Cap's revival in the Silver Age as being those of an impostor. Perhaps there's a storyline Marvel can explore today - the untold adventures of the impostor Captain America - Commie Smasher.

Keep up the fine work. Sincerely,

Anthony F. DeMaria, New York

(*continued on page 74*)

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10 VG+ $60
11 VG $35
12 FN $55
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14 VF- $115
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19 VF- $195
20 VG/FN . . .$50
Nightmare
13 FN+ $75
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#22 VG47 ..... $215
#23 GD+ (AR) $100
#24 GD (AR) $120
#25 GD+ $150
#25 GD $95
#27 GD+ $140
#28 GD+ $125
#29 GD/VG $160
#29 GD+ $110
#30 VG $290
#31 VG $185
#31 VG $150
#32 GD $85
#33 FN- $220
#33 VG/VG+ $185
#34 VG/VG+ $175
#34 VG $150
#35 VG+ $190
#36 VG $165
#36 GD $82
#37 VG $165
#38 FN- (TP) $210
#38 VG (LR) $165
#39 VG/VG+ $165
#39 VG $165
#40 VG+ (NOC) $195
#40 VG (LR) $165
#41 FN- $170
#41 VG/FN $160
#41 VG- $105
#42 VG+ $150
#42 VG $125
#43 GD/VG $90
#43 GD+ $90
#44 VG $125
#44 VG $115
#44 GD+ $90
#45 FN $185
#45 VG $125
#46 VG $125
#47 VG/FN $150
#47 VG $125
#48 VG- $95
#48 GD+ $90
#49 VG $125
#50 VG+ $150
#51 VG- $85
#52 VG $100
#53 VG50 ..... $575
#54 GD+ $75
#54 GD+ $75
#55 FN+ $200
#56 VG $97
#56 GD/VG $80
#57 VG+ $130
#58 VG+ (CT) $100
#59 FN+72 ..... $225
#59 GD+ $75
#60 VG $100
#60 GD+ $75
#61 VG (MR) $200
#61 VG- $175
#62 VG $100
#64 FR/GD $35
#65 VG+ $125
#66 VG- $85
#67 VG- $90
#69 VG $100
#70 VG $100
#71 VG- $75
#73 GD+ $70
#73 GD $45
#74 FN $160
#74 VG50 ..... $100
#74 GD $50
#75 VG+ $115
#76 VG $275
#78 GD/VG $70
#79 VG+ $100
#80 VG $90
#81 GD (TP) $45
#90 VG+ $100
#100 FR $120
others ..... (inquire)

Suspense

#6 VG/VG+ $425
#7 FN/VF $700
#9 FN/VF $800
#10 VF+ $1,200
#10 GD+ $200
#12 GD/VG $250

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Uncle Sam Quarterly

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Weird #1 VG+ (TS) $800

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Wonder Woman

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#5 FN++ $500
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#9 VF+87 ..... $750
#9 FN+ $350
#10 NM91 ..... $675
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#12 VF+89 ..... $600
#14 NM92 ..... $625
#14 NM93 ..... $625
#15 VF+89 ..... $600
#16 NM91 ..... $625
#18 VF+88 ..... $600
#19 BF+87 ..... $475
#27 NM90 ..... $525
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#29 VF+89 ..... $500
#30 VF+89 ..... $500
#31 NM92 ..... $425
#46 FN+73 ..... $120
#105 VG/VG+ $150

Worlds Best #1 VG+ $3,000

Worlds Finest

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#3 VF82 ..... $1,075
#3 FN $800
#4 VG+ $400
#5 FN/VF $900
#6 VG $260
#7 VG+ $375
#8 VG $230
#9 VG+ $250
#11 VG+ $325
#13 VG/VG+ $275
#14 VG+ $250
#15 VG $200
#16 VG+ $250
#17 GD+ $150
#18 GD $85
#20 VG $175
#21 GD $60
#22 VG $120
#23 GD/VG $90
#39 GD+ $75
#74 GD $50
#78 VG $60
#79 VG+ $75
#83 VG+ $60
others ..... (inquire)

Young Allies

#7 VF85 ..... $600
#10 VF77 ..... $350

Zip #1 VG+ $700

Abbreviations:
(TW) Twighlight
(MO) Mohawk
(B) Bethlehem
(WC) Windy City
(MH) Mile High
(D) Denver
(PA) Pennsylvania
(AL) Allentown
(LA) Larson
(WM) White Mountain
(OS) Overstreet
(KC) Kansas City
(LR) Light Restoration
(MR) Moderate Restoration
(ER) Extensive Restoration
(AR) Amateur Restoration
(KE) Essoe Restoration
(C) Cicconi Restoration
(W) Wilson Restoration
(CP) Cleaned & Pressed
(CT) Color Touch
(TP) Tape
(TR) Trimmed
(TS) Tear Seal

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Overlapping Dates For Eras

Wanted to correct a mistake a couple letters made in CBM #34 in crediting me with an article I didn't write. In CBM #31 I did write an article on the two best anti-Hitler comics, but it was West Stephan who wrote the article surveying all of the anti-Hitler comics during World War II. I think the fact that West's article was sandwiched inside of my article helped lead to the minor confusion.

Also Les Daniels raised an excellent question about the period between the Golden Age and the Silver Age, so I thought I'd throw in my two cents. I don't think that the Aluminum Age is going to stick and Age "X" seems derivative. I would probably divide this in-between period into two parts because of the dramatic change wrought by the comics code. I don't think it's useful to lump pre-code and their emasculated post-code cousins together.

The Pre-Code Era (1947-1954) would cover all of the books that were written for adults and that brought about the comics code. To me, the main point to get across with a name for this era is the often adult orientation of the themes and content of these comics. I would put the Pre-Code Era starting in 1947 (or perhaps 1948) as this seems to me to be when the publishers were making major change-over from superhero comics. I don't have any authoritative data to back up my contention and so would love to hear from others to better date this era.

The Pre-Silver Era would cover the post-code books that were drawn prior to the Silver Age (1955-1960). I've made the dates for pre-Silver overlap with the dates for the Silver Age (typically , 1956-1968) because there were not a lot of books imbued with the Silver Age spirit until 1960. Marvel did not even get their Silver Age start until 1961 (Fantastic Four #1) and they continued to publish "Pre-Hero Marvel" books until 1963 (Tales Of Suspense #38) Although it may be confusing to have overlapping dates for eras I think it more accurately reflects how change occurred.

Perhaps Michelle Nolan could help us out in determining the name and date range for this in-between age by summarizing the comic industry year-by-year and genre-by-genre through the 1950's. Michelle has shared just bits and pieces at what sound like exhaustive research of this era. Sincerely,

Alan Bartholomew, Arizona

Perhaps she could?

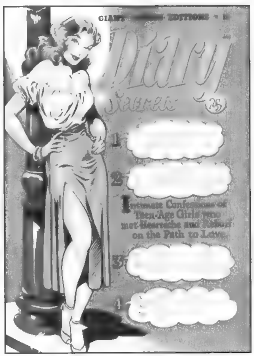
Strange Worlds Info

Just read CBM #32 and found everything exciting as usual. I was particularly interested in Pat S Calhoun's article about STRANGE WORLDS.

I would like to ad two things, in Strange Worlds #3, there is a five page story (approx.) called "I Was The Man Who Lived Twice". It's a tale about a child, adopted by gypsies, who leaves them to make a fortune when he is an adult. Without an education he is only able to just do menial jobs until he is middle aged. When he receives a letter from his father talking about a fountain of youth, he thinks he has a second chance. Unfortunately for him, he becomes very young and finds himself adopted by gypsies again. This story is penciled and probably inked by John Buscema

In Strange Worlds #4, Pat gives the credits of "Manhunt On Mars" to Don Heck. I think

WANTED!



Giant Comics Edition #12

This super rare square-bound giant published in 1950 by St. John features one of Matt Baker's finest covers. I will pay an eager sum for this issue, especially in high grade for my personal collection.

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this five page story was probably penciled and inked by John Buscema.

Anyway keep up the great work and if somebody wants to write a complete biography of John Buscema, especially before 1966, I would be more than interested. Sincerely,

Michel Maillot, France

Big Five DC War Books

It is with great pleasure that I submit my payment of renewal of my subscription to Comic Book Marketplace. I have been with you since old CBM #1 and have thoroughly enjoyed each issue.

For the last 4-5 years I have narrowed my specific interest, attention and pursuit to the BIG 5 DC WAR BOOKS as Chris Pedrin refers to them. This is not an easy task as any DC war collector can confirm but it is a very enjoyable pursuit. This genre of our hobby is replete with some of the best art and story-telling ever produced in any sector or age of comics. The cover art and presentation techniques reached a new zenith with books like GI Combat #'s 56, 69, 78, 84, and 88 to name a few. The phrase "a picture paints a thousand words" couldn't be more appropriate than in this circumstance.

The stable of DC artists and writers during this Golden Age of Silver Age was very impressive with names like Kubert, Heath, Novick, Toth, Andru, Esposito, Grandenetti, Kanigher, and many other prominent names literally from A-Z. This artistic convergence produced an explosion of over 1,200 war books and a new standard of quality in every phase of the artistic presentation and associated story, very likely an era that will never again be repeated in comics.

So it is that interest in this area of collecting is also exploding like never before. I can certainly confirm what Matt Schiffman indicates almost every time in his Market Report and more specifically in CBM issue #34, in his words "the DC war books are heating up and are difficult to locate, let alone in grade". Case in point, try to find a GI Combat #87 (1st Haunted Tank) or GI Combat #56 (D.I. and the Sand Fleas) in high grade or at all. I had one dealer in California tell me had a GIC #87 in high grade but that I wouldn't like the price – a claimed NM at 30 times book. These books are not easy to find for sale and I have hunted for them by telephone and FAX all over the country. Because I'm not a NM fanatic I-get.my share but the hunt is more difficult all the time. I see more so called rare or scarce Golden Age books for sale than some of these early key or famous cover DC War books.

For anyone thinking about pursuing these elusive gems, this area of collecting can be very frustrating if volume collecting is your thing but the "thrill of the hunt" as you claim a prize from this enlightened age of comic production can be quite exhilarating. I have met some great people and made some excellent contacts as I have searched for these books further expanding my potential sources for them.

A great reference companion that I can certainly recommend is Chris Pedrin's Big Five Information Guide from the Pedrin Conservatory in Redwood City California. This book is jammed full of interesting and useful information for those after these books. It also has a complete listing of all the DC War books including writers, artists, inkers and a well thought out price guide. I have also found the BIG 5 experts list at the end of the guide quite useful.

In conclusion, thank you for opening my eyes to many other wonderful areas of this hobby and also the color gallery section which allows us to see some of these four color masterpieces that we might not see any place else. Continued best wishes and I hope to see you in San Diego in July.

Lloyd Duff, Nevada

Golden Age on Microfiche

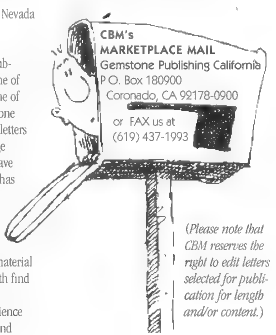
I am writing primarily to renew my subscription to CBM which I consider one of my reading highlights every month. One of the questions I have (and maybe someone can address it in a future article or the letters column) is about reprints of Golden Age material. Since DC's Archive editions have seemingly come to an end and Marvel has apparently turned it's back on it's past, there's very little out there for those of us who love Golden Age material but don't have the bucks to compete with the big time collectors on the "A list" material and have to find niches that we can both find and afford.

Has anyone out there had any experience with MicroColor International of Midland Park, New Jersey? I have a sales brochure from them which is at least a year old. It advertises good runs of DC, Marvel, Fawcett, and other publishers in microfiche which is a turn off to me, but getting the opportunity to see this material in any form is better than not seeing it at all. I don't know anyone who has ordered or even seen any of the products of this company. Are they still around? Has anyone had any experience with this stuff? Is it a good alternative for fans who will never be able to afford the originals, much less find them. Some help would be much appreciated.

Enough for now, keep up the excellent work. Here's hoping you find that book you've always drooled over in mint condition and God Bless.

Jerry Eiff, Wisconsin

I've had good business dealings with MicroColor International... they've supplied good microfiche products at reasonable prices. What I want to know is... is there a scanner that will allow you blow up microfiche and retain quality? I'd love to hear from some CBM reader who is knowledgeable about microfiche enlargement and reproduction. Oh and I have found a book I've drooled over on occasion... but those saliva stains always seem to lower the condition! Thanks for writing Jerry. If you'd care to write send your comments to:



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HERE'S WHAT I THINK!

JOHN MLACHNIK

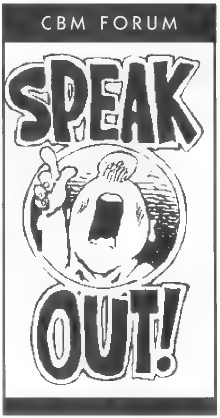
Rarity...the future of Collecting? Four Nominations to the "Rare Comics Hall Of Fame"

Comic book collecting has moved ahead strongly in the last several years, beginning with Ernest Gerber's brilliant *Photo-Journal Guide To Comic Books*, the addition of several competitor comic book price guides and monthly comic book updates, and most importantly the auctions through the Sotheby's, Christie's, and Guernsey's auction houses, which have brought in over 3 million dollars in sales of comic books and original art. Who would have expected the "White Mountain" copy of *Amazing Fantasy* #15 to sell in the forty thousands?

As the more serious collector enters the comic hobby, I wonder when rarity will become the primary focus for collecting and how the *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* will address rare comic books in future issues? It's confusing to think that in Stamp, Coin, and Baseball Card collecting, rarity is the basis for value (i.e., 1913 nickel, only five known copies; one recently sold for one million dollars). In comic book collecting, however, rarity is virtually ignored. Most collectors would prefer and *Amazing Spider-Man* #1 (1700 copies known to exist) to *Motion Picture Funnies Weekly* #1 (eight known copies with a ninth suspected).

In fact, according to the *Photo-Journal Guide To Comic Books*, rarity can actually hurt the value of a comic book, since an increase in value is determined by an average of trading prices for a year. Since rare comic books seldom trade, there is little, if any, price increase in the price guide. How can we justify the current price-tag on *Motion Picture Funnies Weekly* #1 (the 1st printed appearance of Sub-Mariner!) when there are only a handful of copies left in existence?

I think it's only a matter of time before rare comic books receive the recognition they deserve. This writing is lovingly dedicated and devoted to several of these gems...take a look at the future of comic book collecting...



Gene Autry #1 (Fawcett Publications, 1942)

There are actually two #1 issues; Dell Publication's 1946 *Gene Autry* #1 and this, the much rarer Fawcett #1 which represents the single most valuable and sought-after western comic book. *Gene Autry* #1 is a no-advertisement, 64 page, 13-"chapter" comic book that reads like a movie serial, pitting Gene against a black-hooded villain known as the "Cloven Hoof". The back cover features the first photo pin-up of Gene Autry in comic books. On page A-36 of the 23rd Edition of *The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide*, Gene Autry #1 ties with Tom Mix #1 in the "Chronological List Of Key Comic Books For Period 1933 To 1943" as the most important western comic book, honored with two stars. Collector demand has driven the price of *Gene Autry* #1 to over $3,200 in high grade. *Gene Autry Comics* also has the distinction of being the longest-running Golden Age western series, lasting 18 years. The Fawcett *Gene Autry* #1 is listed as "rare" in the Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide, with only 10 to 20 copies estimated to exist.

Current NM Update price $4,600

Motion Picture Funnies Weekly #1 (First Funnies, Inc., 1939)

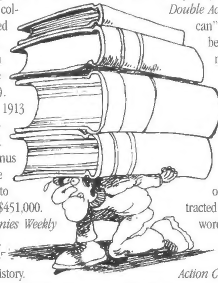
According to the *Price Guide*, the origin and first printed appearance of "Sub-Mariner" (8 pages). *Motion Picture Funnies Weekly* #1, a 36 page black & white giveaway, also features appearances of "Spy-Ring" and "American Ace". The full-color cover by Fred Schwab depicts a smiling boy walking off with a ladder being used by a man working on a marquee. *Motion Picture Funnies Weekly* is very rare...only eight known copies exist (one near-mint with white pages, the remaining seven copies in fine condition with brown pages). The eight known copies (with a ninth suspected) were discovered in 1974, in the estate of the deceased publisher, John Compton. Covers only, to issues #2 through #4, were also found which were evidently printed in advance along with #1. The first issue (#1) was to be distributed only through motion picture houses. Possible distribution at local theaters in Boston is suspected. It is believed, however, that only advanced copies were sent out and the movie theaters rejected the idea.

The last panel of the Sub-Mariner story contains a rectangular box with Bill Everett's signature, the date 4/39, and "Continued Next Week" printed in it. When reprinted seven months later in the 11/39 issue of *Marvel Comics* #1, the box was left in, with the date and lettering omitted. Color was also added over the craft tint which was used to shade the black & white version. Everett also added four pages in full color for *Marvel Comics* #1, thus extending the original eight pages to the story

to make it a twelve pager.

In Sub-Mariner, *MPFW* #1 represents the first appearance of a mutant in comic books, a trend that would begin in earnest 24 years later in the September, 1963 issue of *X-Men* #1.

In my opinion, *Motion Picture Funnies Weekly* #1 has an unlimited dollar-value potential, comparing similarly to Stamp, Coin, and Baseball Card's single most valuable and sought-after collectibles: (1) "Inverted Jenny" - 24¢ airmail stamp depicting an upside-down bi-plane (100 known copies). Guides for $135,000. (2) 1913 Nickel - Five unauthorized copies minted. Sold for $1,000,000 (3) Honus Wager T-206 - Rare tobacco card (24 known to exist). Recently sold for $451,000.



Motion Picture Funnies Weekly #1 is without a doubt, the single most controversial comic book in history. The debate which started in 1975 continues to this day as to whether *MPFW* #1 or *Marvel Comics* #1 came first, laying true claim to the first appearance of Sub-Mariner. The controversy will probably never be resolved, deepening the mystery and desire for *MPFW* #1, the single most sought-after of rare comic books.

Current NM Update price - $13,000.

Double Action Comics #2 (DC Comics, January, 1940)

This is a remarkably rare and unique comic book with only five to seven copies known to exist. The contents of this black & white, 68 page comic, were pre-hero stories; the full-color cover reprinted from *Adventure Comics* #37. Although issue #1 is thought to exist as a "ashcan" (an experiment for *Action Comics* #1 that subsequently appeared in June, 1938), *Double Action* #2 is not an "ashcan" comic and may have been distributed through newsstands. Another theory is that *Double Action* #2 was prepared by one of the many shops (i.e. Lloyd Jaquet and others) as a presentation work for DC Comics in order to secure subcontracted work. The style of the words "Action" and "Comics" is similar to the logo on *Action Comics*, Superman's flagship title. A near-mint copy of *Double Action* #2 sold at Sotheby's first comic book auction on December 18, 1991 for $6,050 and the Overstreet copy sold to a collector in California for $8.000.

Current NM Update price: $9,500

Famous Funnies, Series 1 (Eastern Color Printing Co., 1934)

This represents the first comic book with a 10¢ cover price sold to the general public through chain stores. It contains Sunday strip reprints of Mutt & Jeff, Reg'lar Fellers, Joe Palooka and others previously featured in *Famous Funnies, A Carnival Of Comics*, and *Funnies On Parade*. It's unprecedented success set up the beginning of the first continuous series (anthology reprint) title in comics, and was the acid test for newsstand distribution which began with *Famous Funnies* #1 in July of 1934. It is estimated that 12 copies only exist from the initial 35,000 print run.

Current NM Update price: $17,000

Rare comic books are buried treasure. They are priceless regardless of content and should be sought out by serious collectors. They're out there somewhere... let the search begin. Until we meet again... ■

Special thanks to Duncan McAlpine, Ernest Gerber, and Bob Overstreet.

CBM readers want to know...

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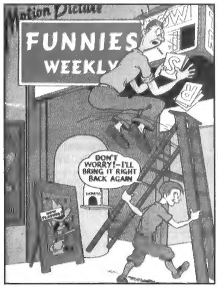

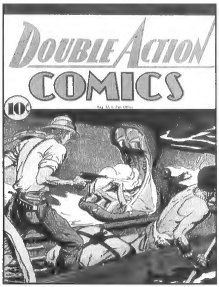

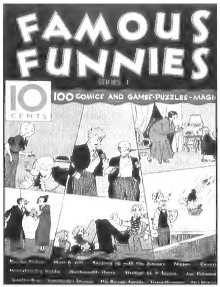

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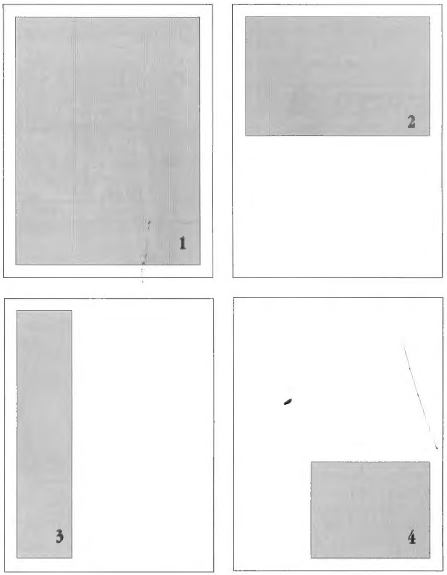

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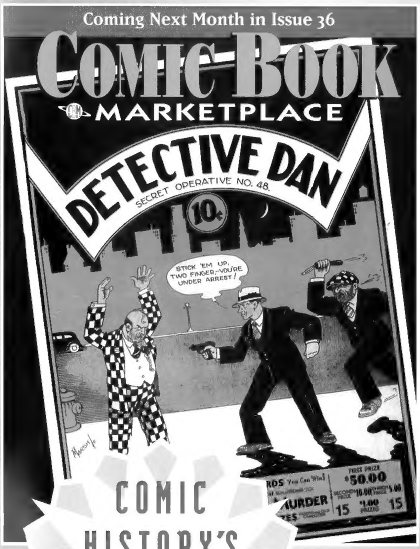

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